The Cradle Book of Verse

LOUISE HOVDE

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THE CRADLE BOOK OF VERSE

From the painting by
MARIE HAUGHTON SPAETH

THE CRADLE BOOK OF VERSE

AN ANTHOLOGY OF BABY POETRY

Chosen by
LOUISE HOVDE

"We do but borrow children of God and
lend them to the world."
—JOHN DONNE

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THE CRADLE BOOK OF VERSE
— A —
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO MY MOTHER

"Und Kinder brauchen Liebe"

Lessing

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THE BABY

"Unto us a child is born"

THE CRADLE BOOK OF VERSE

"O, OLD! O, NEW!" *

Who are you?
Why make me wait
From the hour of dew
Till another sunset?
Why do I look
For your coming?
Listen to the weeping brook
That might bring
To my lonely shore
A word from you.
Ah, nothing! not a leaf's tremor!
O, old! O, longed for new!
Who are you? I ask;
Know not why I seek
From day to dusk
Without waking or sleep,—

**"O, Old! O, New!" is the cry of a "Poati," e.g., a mother's cry to her unborn child. "Poati" has no precise English synonym.*

No sleep! no waking!
A dreaming, a longing;
Not knowing, yet seeking,
For your coming waiting—
O, spring-born!
O, autumn-clad!
O, soul's new morn!
O, old! O, glad!
So glad, so young!
O, unseen, unknown,
O, fugitive vision!
O, eternal moan
In my heart—
O, tearful Soul of laughter,
Untouched, unhurt,
O, sweet! O, bitter!
My born yet unborn,
Shadow not fallen
O, undawning morn—
O, message unbroken.
Why, how, when?
I wait, wait for you,
O embrace of earth and heaven;
O, Old! O, New!

DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI.

THE BIRTHNIGHT: TO F.

Dearest, it was a night
That in its darkness rocked Orion's stars;
A sighing wind ran faintly white
Along the willows, and the cedar boughs
Laid their wide hands in stealthy peace across
The starry silence of their antique moss:
No sound save rushing air
Cold, yet all sweet with spring,
And in thy mother's arms, couched weeping there,
Thou, lovely thing.

WALTER DE LA MARE

NEW-BORN

Frail new-born wings,
Small voice that sings,
New little beating heart,
Dread not thy birth,
Nor fear the earth—
The Infinite thou art:
The sun doth shine,
The earth doth spin,
For welcome—enter in
This green and daisied sphere,
Rejoice—and have no fear.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

A NEW BEING

I know myself no more, my child,
  Since thou art come to me,
Pity so tender and so wild
  Hath wrapped my thoughts of thee.

These thoughts, a fiery gentle rain,
  Are from the Mother shed,
Where many a broken heart hath lain
  And many a weeping head.

A. E.

(GEORGE W. RUSSELL).

TO AN INFANT NEWLY BORN

On parent's knees, a naked new-born child,
Weeping thou sat'st while all around thee smiled;
So live, that sinking in thy long last sleep,
Calm thou may'st smile, while all around thee weep.

SIR WILLIAM JONES

"WHENEVER A LITTLE CHILD IS BORN"

Whenever a little child is born
All night long a soft wind rocks the corn;
One more buttercup wakes to the morn,
Somewhere, somewhere.

One more rosebud shy will unfold,
One more grass-blade push through the mold,
One more bird-song the air will hold,
Somewhere, somewhere.

AGNES CARTER MASON

THE LAST ARRIVAL

There came to port last Sunday night
  The queerest little craft,
Without an inch of rigging on;
  I looked and looked—and laughed!

It seemed so curious that she
  Should cross the unknown water
And moor herself within my room—
  My daughter! oh, my daughter!

Yet by these presents witness all
  She's welcome fifty times,
And comes consigned in hope and love
  And common-metre rhymes.

She has no manifest but this:
  No flag floats o'er the water;
She's rather new for our marine—
  My daughter! oh, my daughter!

Ring out, wild bells, and tame ones too!
  Ring out the lover's moon!
Ring in the little worsted socks!
  Ring in the bib and spoon!

Ring out the muse! Ring in the nurse!
  Ring in the milk and water!
Away with paper, pen, and ink!
  My daughter! oh, my daughter!

GEORGE W. CABLE

THE WONDER CHILD

"Our little babe," each said, "shall be
Like unto thee"—"Like unto *thee!*"
"Her mother's"—"Nay, his father's"—"eyes,"
"Dear curls like thine," but each replies,
"As thine, all thine, and naught of me."

What sweet solemnity to see
The little life upon thy knee,
And whisper as so soft it lies,—
"Our little babe!"

For, whether it be he or she,
A David or a Dorothy,
"As mother fair," or "father wise,"
Both when it's good, and when it cries,
One thing is certain,—it will be
Our little babe.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

INFANT JOY

"I have no name;
I am but two days old."
—What shall I call thee?
"I happy am;
Joy is my name."
—Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy, but two days old;
Sweet joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile:
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee!

WILLIAM BLAKE

SONNET

To a Friend, Who Asked How I Felt, When the Nurse First Presented My Infant to Me.

Charles!* my slow heart was only sad, when first
I scann'd that face of feeble infancy:
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
All I had been, and all my babe might be!
But when I saw it on its Mother's arm,
And hanging at her bosom (she the while
Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile)
Then I was thrill'd and melted, and most warm
Impress'd a Father's kiss: and all beguil'd
Of dark remembrance, and presageful fear
I seem'd to see an Angel's form appear.—
'Twas even thine, beloved Woman mild!
So for the Mother's sake the Child was dear
And dearer was the Mother for the Child.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

* *Charles Lamb.*

TO A NEW-BORN BABY GIRL

And did thy sapphire shallop slip
Its moorings suddenly, to dip
Adown the clear, ethereal sea
From star to star, all silently?
What tenderness of archangels
In silver thrilling syllables
Pursued thee, or what dulcet hymn
Low-chanted by the cherubim?
And thou departing must have heard
The holy Mary's farewell word,
Who with deep eyes and wistful smile
Remembered Earth a little while.

Now from the coasts of morning pale
Comes safe to port thy tiny sail.
Now have we seen by early sun,
Thy miracle of life begun.
All breathing and aware thou art,
With beauty templed in thy heart
To let thee recognize the thrill
Of wings along far azure hill,
And hear within the hollow sky
Thy friends the angels rushing by.

These shall recall that thou hast known
Their distant country as thine own,
To spare thee word of vales and streams,
And publish heaven through thy dreams,
The human accents of the breeze
Through swaying star-acquainted trees
Shall seem a voice heard earlier,
Her voice, the adoring sigh of her,
When thou amid rosy cherub-play
Didst hear her call thee, far away,
And dream in very Paradise
The worship of thy mother's eyes.

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

A BIRTH-SONG

For Olivia Frances Madox Rossetti, born September 20, 1875

Out of the dark sweet sleep
Where no dreams laugh or weep,
  Borne through bright gates of birth
Into the dim sweet light
Where day still dreams of night
  While heaven takes form on earth,
White rose of spirit and flesh, red lily of love,
What note of song have we
Fit for the birds and thee,
Fair nestling couched beneath the mother-dove?

Nay, in some more divine
Small speechless song of thine
  Some news too good for words,
Heart-hushed and smiling, we
Might hope to have of thee,
  The youngest of God's birds,
If thy sweet sense might mix itself with ours,
If ours might understand
The language of thy land,
Ere thine become the tongue of mortal hours:

Ere thy lips learn too soon
Their soft first human tune,
Sweet, but less sweet than now,
And thy raised eyes to read
Glad and good things indeed,
But none so sweet as thou:
Ere thought lift up their flower-soft lids to see
What life and love on earth
Bring thee for gifts at birth,
But none so good as thine who hast given us thee:

Now, ere thy sense forget
The heaven that fills it yet,
Now, sleeping or awake,
If thou couldst tell, or we
Ask and be heard of thee,
For love's undying sake,
From thy dumb lips divine and bright mute speech
Such news might touch our ear
That then would burn to hear
Too high a message now for man's to reach.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

MATERNITY

My little one, thy mother's dreaming eyes,
Dwell on thy nestling head against her breast
With that supreme and satisfied surprise,
Maternity achieved. The strange behest
Of Life infusèd and made animate,
Of soul incarnate, loosened from the spell
Of mortal matter and sent forth elate
To wing its flight from that unfathomed cell
Whence it was born, unto the radiant sun
That ever beckons to a higher flight;
The golden goal for which the race is run,
The heavenly goal which is eternal light.
Ah! dreaming mother, dost thou recognize
The wingèd spirit in thy baby's eyes!

CORINNE ROOSEVELT ROBINSON

THE SALUTATION

These little limbs,
These eyes and hands which here I find,
This panting heart wherewith my life begins;
Where have you been? Behind
What curtain were you from me hid so long!
Where was, in what abyss, my new-made tongue?

When silent I
So many thousand thousand years
Beneath the dust did in a chaos lie.
How could I smiles, or tears,
Or lips, or hands, or eyes, or ears perceive?
Welcome ye treasure which I now receive.

I that so long
Was nothing from eternity,
Did little think such joys as ear and tongue
To celebrate or see:
Such sounds to hear, such hands to feel, such feet,
Such eyes and objects, on the ground to meet.

New burnisht joys!
Which finest gold and pearl excel!
Such sacred treasures are the limbs of boys
In which a soul doth dwell:
Their organized joints and azure veins
More wealth include than the dead world contains.

From dust I rise
And out of nothing now awake;
These brighter regions which salute mine eyes
A gift from God I take:
The earth, the seas, the light, the lofty skies,
The sun and stars are mine; if these I prize.

A stranger here
Strange things doth meet, strange glory see,
Strange treasures lodg'd in this fair world appear,
Strange all and new to me:
But that they *mine* should be who nothing was,
That strangest is of all; yet brought to pass.

THOMAS TRAHERNE

WONDER

How like an angel came I down!
How bright are all things here!
When first among his works I did appear
O how their glory did me crown!
The world resembled his eternity,
In which my soul did walk;
And ev'ry thing that I did see
Did with me talk.

The skies in their magnificence,
The lovely lively air,
Oh how divine, how soft, how sweet, how fair!
The stars did entertain my sense;
And all the works of God so bright and pure,
So rich and great, did seem
As if they ever must endure
In my esteem.

A native health and innocence
Within my bones did grow,
And while my God did all his glories show
I felt a vigor in my sense

That was all spirit: I within did flow
With seas of life like wine;
I nothing in the world did know
But 'twas divine.

Harsh rugged objects were conceal'd,
Oppressions, tears, and cries,
Sins, griefs, complaints, dissensions, weeping eyes,
Were hid: and only things reveal'd
Which heavenly spirits and the angels prize:
The state of innocence
And bliss, not trades and poverties,
Did fill my sense.

The streets seem'd paved with golden stones,
The boys and girls all mine;
To me how did their lovely faces shine!
The sons of men all holy ones,
In joy and beauty, then appear'd to me;
And everything I found
(While like an angel I did see)
Adorn'd the ground.

Rich diamonds, and pearl, and gold
Might everywhere be seen;
Rare colors, yellow, blue, red, white, and green
Mine eyes on every side behold:

All that I saw, a wonder did appear,
Amazement was my bliss:
That and my wealth met everywhere.
No joy to this!

Curs'd, ill-devis'd proprieties
With envy, avarice,
And fraud, (those fiends that spoil ev'n paradise)
Were not the object of mine eyes;
Nor hedges, ditches, limits, narrow bounds:
I dreamt not ought of those,
But in surveying all men's grounds
I found repose.

For property itself was mine,
And hedges, ornaments:
Walls, houses, coffers, and their rich contents,
To make me rich combine.
Clothes, costly jewels, laces, I esteem'd
My wealth by others worn,
For me they all to wear them seem'd,
When I was born.

THOMAS TRAHERNE

A POET'S WELCOME TO HIS LOVE-BEGOTTEN DAUGHTER

The First Instance that Entitled Him to the Venerable Appellation of Father

Thou's welcome, wean; mishanter [1] fa' me,
If thoughts o' thee, or yet thy mamie,
Shall ever daunton me or awe me,
My bonie lady,
Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me
Tyta or daddie.

Tho' now they ca' me fornicator,
An' tease my name in kintry clatter,
The mair they talk, I'm kent the better,
E'en let them clash;
An auld wife's tongue's a feckless [2] matter
To gie ane fash.

Welcome! my bonie, sweet, wee dochter,
Tho' ye come here a wee unsought for,
And tho' your comin' I hae fought for,
Baith kirk and queir; [3]
Yet, by my faith, ye're no unwrought for,
That I shall swear!

[1] *mishap.*
[2] *powerless.*
[3] *and that right dear.*

Wee image o' my bonie Betty,
As fatherly I kiss and daut thee,
As dear, and near my heart I set thee,
Wi' as gude will
As a' the priests had seen me get thee
That's out o' h-ll.

Sweet fruit o' mony a merry dint,
My funny toil is now a' tint,
Sin' thou cam to the warl' asklent,
Which fools may scoff at;
In my last plack [4] thy part's be in't
The better ha'f o't.

Tho' I should be the waur bestead
Thou's be as braw and bienly clad,
And thy young years as nicely bred
Wi' education,
As any brat o' wedlock's bed,
In a' thy station.

Lord grant that thou may ay inherit
Thy mither's person, grace, an' merit,
An' thy poor worthless daddy's spirit,
Without his failins,
'Twill please me mair to see thee heir it,
Than stocket mailens.[5]

[4] *the smallest coin.*
[5] *farms.*

For if thou be what I wad hae thee,
And tak the counsel I shall gie thee,
I'll never rue my trouble wi' thee—
The cost nor shame o't,
But be a loving father to thee,
And brag the name o't.

ROBERT BURNS

November, 1784.

A BABE FORLORN

A little, sorrowful, deserted thing,
Begot of love, and yet no love begetting;
Guiltless of shame, and yet for shame to wring;
And too soon banish'd from a mother's petting,
To churlish nurture and the wide world's fretting,
For alien pity and unnatural care;—
Alas! to see how the cold dew kept wetting
His childish coats, and dabbled all his hair,
Like gossamers across his forehead fair.

His pretty pouting mouth, witless of speech,
Lay half-way open like a rose-lipp'd shell;
And his young cheek was softer than a peach,
Whereon his tears, for roundness, could not dwell,
But quickly roll'd themselves to pearls, and fell,
Some on the grass, and some against his hand,
Or haply wander'd to the dimpled well,
Which love beside his mouth had sweetly plann'd,
Yet not for tears, but mirth and smilings bland.

Pity it was to see those frequent tears
Falling regardless from his friendless eyes;

There was such beauty in those twin blue spheres,
As any mother's heart might leap to prize;
Blue were they, like the zenith of the skies
Soften'd betwixt two clouds, both clear and mild;—
Just touch'd with thought, and yet not over wise,
They show'd the gentle spirit of a child,
Not yet by care or any craft defiled.

THOMAS HOOD

"YOU ARE MORE BLESSED"

You are more blessed than other babies are:
  Your shining eyes grow brighter every day
With radiance that reminds me of the star
  That showed where Jesus lay.

I like to think that you are set apart,
  A flower that never sprang from earthly loam,
A rose of Heaven that nestles in my heart
  And dreams about its home.

ALINE KILMER

A PASTORALL UPON THE BIRTH OF PRINCE CHARLES, PRESENTED TO THE KING, AND SET BY MR. NIC. LANIERE

The Speakers, *Mirtillo*, *Amintas*, and *Amarillis*

Amin. Good day, Mirtillo. *Mirt.* And to you no less,
And all faire signs lead on our shepardesse.
Amar. With all white luck to you. *Mirt.* But say, what news
Stirs in our sheep-walk? *Amin.* None, save that my ewes,
My weathers, lambes, and wanton kids are well,
Smooth, faire, and fat; none better I can tell:
Or that his day Menalchas keeps a feast
For his sheep-shearers. *Mirt.* True, these are the least,
But, dear Amintas and sweet Amarillis,
Rest but a while here by this bank of lillies,
And lend a gentle eare to one report
The Country has. *Amint.* From whence? *Amar.* From whence? *Mirt.* The court
Three dayes before the shutting in of May,

(With whitest wool be ever crown'd that day!)
To all our joy, a sweet-fac't child was borne,
More tender than the childhood of the Morne.
Chor. Pan pipe to him, and bleats of lambs and sheep
Let lullaby the pretty prince asleep!
Mirt. And that his birth should be more singular,
At noone of day was seene a silver star,
Bright as the wise-men's torch which guided them
To God's sweet babe, when borne at Bethlehem;
While golden angels (some have told to me)
Sung out his birth with heav'nly minstralsie.
Amint. O rare! But is't a trespasse if we three
Should wend along his baby-ship to see?
Mirt. Not so, not so. *Chor.* But if it chance to prove
At most a fault, 'tis but a fault of love.
Amar. But, deare Mirtillo, I have heard it told,
Those learned men brought incense, myrrhe, and gold,
From countries far, with store of spices sweet,
And laid them downe for offrings at his feet.
Mirt. 'Tis true indeed; and each of us will bring
Unto our smiling and our blooming king,
A neat, though not so great an offering.
Amar. A garland for my gift shall be,
Of flowers ne'er suckt by th' theeving bee,

And all most sweet; yet all lesse sweet than he.
Amint. And I will beare along with you
Leaves dropping downe the honeyed dew,
With oaten pipes, as sweet as new.
Mirt. And I a sheep-hook will bestow,
To have his little king-ship know,
As he is prince, he's shepherd too.
Chor. Come let's away, and quickly let's be drest,
And quickly give: the swiftest grace is best.
And when before him we have laid our treasures,
We'll blesse the babe, then back to countrie pleasures.

ROBERT HERRICK

ON THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCESS ROYAL

Behold where thou dost lie,
Heeding naught, remote on high!
Naught of all the news we sing
Dost thou know, sweet ignorant thing;
Naught of planet's love nor people's;
Nor dost hear the giddy steeples
Carolling of thee and thine,
As if heaven had rained them wine;
Nor dost care for all the pains
Of ushers and of chamberlains,
Nor the doctor's learned looks,
Nor the very bishop's books,
Nor the lace that wraps thy chin,
No, nor for thy rank a pin.
E'en thy father's loving hand
Nowise dost thou understand,
When he makes thee feebly grasp
His finger with a tiny clasp;
Nor dost thou know thy very mother's
Balmy bosom from another's,

Though thy small blind eyes pursue it;
Nor the arms that drew thee to it;
Nor the eyes that while they fold thee,
Never can enough behold thee!

LEIGH HUNT

CHOOSING A NAME

I have got a new-born sister:
I was nigh the first that kissed her,
When the nursing-woman brought her
To papa, his infant daughter,
How papa's dear eyes did glisten!
She will shortly be to christen;
And papa has made the offer,
I shall have the naming of her.

Now I wonder what would please her,—
Charlotte, Julia, or Louisa?
Ann and Mary, they're too common;
Joan's too formal for a woman;
Jane's a prettier name beside;
But we had a Jane that died.
They would say, if 'twas Rebecca,
That she was a little Quaker.
Edith's pretty, but that looks
Better in old English books;
Ellen's left off long ago;
Blanche is out of fashion now.
None that I have named as yet

Is so good as Margaret.
Emily is neat and fine;
What do you think of Caroline?
How I'm puzzled and perplexed
What to choose or think of next!
I am in a little fever
Lest the name that I should give her
Should disgrace her or defame her;—
I will leave papa to name her.

MARY LAMB

THE DAY OF BAPTISM

A Member of Christ, the Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven

Hush, hush, my babe!
Ah, hush that wailing cry!
Nay, start not, little one,
Thy mother's nigh.

Hush, hush, my babe,
Safe in thy sheltered nest,
Rest, rest thy tossing head
On mother's breast.

Hush, hush, my babe,
Thine angel sees His face,
Whose love encircleth thee,
Whose arms embrace.

Ah, hush the moon
Which makes thy mother weep!
Good angels, baby dear,
Watch o'er thee keep.

THE DAY OF BAPTISM

Hush, hush, my babe,
God's little child thou art;
A place is all thine own
In Jesus' heart.

Then sleep, my babe,
My little treasure, sleep.—
The weary eyes are closed—
Sleep, baby, sleep.

ESTHER WIGLESWORTH

ON THE CHRISTENING OF A FRIEND'S CHILD

This day among the faithful placed
And fed with fontal manna;
O with maternal title graced
Dear Anna's dearest Anna!

While others wish thee wise and fair,
A maid of spotless fame,
I'll breathe this more compendious prayer—
May'st thou deserve thy name!

Thy Mother's name, a potent spell,
That bids the Virtues hie
From mystic grove and living cell,
Confessed to Fancy's eye.

Meek Quietness without offence;
Content in homespun kirtle.
True Love, and true Love's innocence,
White blossom of the myrtle!

Associates of thy name, sweet child!
These virtues may'st thou win;
With face as eloquently mild
To say, they lodge within.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

THE CHRISTENING

Arrayed—a half-angelic sight—
In vests of pure baptismal white,
The mother to the font doth bring
The little helpless, nameless thing
With hushes soft and mild caressing,
At once to get—a name and blessing.
Close by the babe the priest doth stand,
The cleansing water at his hand
Which must assoil the soul within
From every stain of Adam's sin.
The infant eyes the mystic scenes,
Nor knows what all this wonder means;
And now he smiles, as if to say,
"I am a Christian made this day;"
Now frighted clings to nurse's hold,
Shrinking from the water cold,
Whose virtues, rightly understood,
Are, as Bethesda's waters, good.
Strange words,—the World, the Flesh, the Devil,—
Poor babe, what can it know of evil?
But we must silently adore
Mysterious truths, and not explore.

Enough for him, in after times,
When he shall read these artless rhymes,
If, looking back upon this day
With quiet conscience, he can say,
"I have in part redeemed the pledge
Of my baptismal privilege;
And more and more will strive to flee
All which my sponsors kind did then renounce for me."

CHARLES LAMB

A CHRISTENING

They took him to the hoary church,
And waited near the font awhile,
With something new of sacredness
In handclasp, whisper, look, and smile.
The glorious mantle of a saint,
Set in a stained-glass window, poured
A beam of scarlet light across
The child they offered to the Lord.

The mother, never quite content
With any folding of his gown,
She smoothed him that his limpid eyes
No longer kept the eyelids down.
Then she who mothered him in God
Shaped an ungiven kiss; and now
The trusted Vicar came to sign
The Cross of Christ upon his brow.

But he, unwitting how his frock
Was puckered, or his sash awry,
Gazed at a shepherd with a lamb
Beneath a glassy spread of sky;

And then, before the reverent priest
Had marked him soldier, kinsman, heir,
He lifted up his weakling arms
Toward the Saviour imaged there.

'Twas felt by all who saw him thus
Enrol himself, at unawares,
That Heaven accepted him without
The drops of water and the prayers;
But when between his little brows
The sign of Calvary was pressed,
They knew that Christ had found a place
For Christopher upon His breast.

NORMAN GALE

WEIGHING THE BABY

"How many pounds does the baby weigh—
Baby who came but a month ago?
How many pounds from the crowning curl
To the rosy point of the restless toe?"

Grandfather ties the 'kerchief knot,
Tenderly guides the swinging weight,
And carefully over his glasses peers
To read the record, "Only eight."

Softly the echo goes around:
The father laughs at the tiny girl;
The fair young mother sings the words,
While grandmother smooths the golden curl.

And stooping above the precious thing,
Nestles a kiss within a prayer,
Murmuring softly, "Little one,
Grandfather did not weigh you fair."

Nobody weighed the baby's smile,
Or the love that came with the helpless one;
Nobody weighed the threads of care,
From which a woman's life is spun.

No index tells the mighty worth
  Of a little baby's quiet breath—
A soft, unceasing metronome,
  Patient and faithful until death.

Nobody weighed the baby's soul,
  For here on earth no weights there be
That could avail; God only knows
  Its value in eternity.

Only eight pounds to hold a soul
  That seeks no angel's silver wing,
But shrines it in this human guise,
  Within so frail and small a thing!

Oh, mother! laugh your merry note,
  Be gay and glad, but don't forget
From baby's eyes looks out a soul
  That claims a home in Eden yet.

ETHEL LYNN BEERS

BABYHOOD

I

A baby shines as bright
If winter or if May be
On eyes that keep in sight
A baby.

Though dark the skies or grey be,
It fills our eyes with light,
If midnight or midday be.

Love hails it, day and night,
The sweetest thing that may be,
Yet cannot praise aright
A baby.

II

All heaven, in every baby born,
All absolute of earthly leaven,
Reveals itself, though man may scorn
All heaven.

Yet man might feel all sin forgiven,
All grief appeased, all pain outworn,
By this one revelation given.

Soul now forget thy burdens borne:
Heart, be thy joys now seven times seven:
Love shows in light more bright than morn
All heaven.

III

What likeness may define, and stray not
From truth's exactest way,
A baby's beauty? Love can say not
What likeness may.

The Mayflower loveliest held in May
Of all that shine and stay not
Laughs not in rosier disarray.

Sleek satin, swansdown, buds that play not
As yet with winds that play,
Would fain be matched with this, and may not:
What likeness may?

IV

Rose, round whose bed
Dawn's cloudlets close,
Earth's brightest-bud
Rose!

No song, love knows,
May praise the head
Your curtain shows.

Ere sleep has fled,
The whole child glows
One sweet live red
Rose!

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

THE BABIE

Nae shoon to hide her tiny taes,
  Nae stockin' on her feet;
Her supple ankles white as snaw,
  Or early blossoms sweet.

Her simple dress o' sprinkled pink,
  Her double, dimplit chin,
Her puckered lips, an' baumy mou',
  With na ane tooth within.

Her een sae like her mither's een,
  Twa gentle, liquid things;
Her face is like an angel's face,—
  We're glad she has nae wings.

She is the buddin' of our luve,
  A giftie God gied us:
We maun na luve the gift owre weel,
  'Twad be nae blessin' thus.

We still maun luve the Giver mair,
  An' see Him in the given;
An' sae she'll lead us up to Him,
  Our babie straight frae Heaven.

JEREMIAH EAMES RANKIN

THE BABY

What is the pretty little thing
That nurse so carefully doth bring,
And round its head her apron fling?
A baby.

Oh, dear, how very soft its cheek:
Why, nurse, I cannot make it speak,
And it can't walk, it is so weak,
Poor baby.

Here take a bite, you little dear,
I've got some cake and sweetmeats here,
'Tis very nice, you need not fear,
You baby.

Oh, I'm afraid that it will die,
Why can't it eat as well as I,
And jump, and talk? do let it try,
Poor baby.

Why, you were once a baby, too,
And could not jump, as now you do,
But good mamma took care of you,
Like baby.

And then she taught your pretty feet
To pat along the carpet neat,
And called papa to come and meet
His baby.

Oh, good mamma, to take such care,
And no kind pains and trouble spare,
To feed and nurse you when you were
A baby.

JANE AND ANN TAYLOR

BABY-LAND

"How many miles to Baby-land?"
"Any one can tell;
Up one flight,
To the right;
Please to ring the bell."

"What can you see in Baby-land?"
"Little folks in white—
Downy heads,
Cradle beds,
Faces pure and bright!"

"What do they do in Baby-land?"
"Dream and wake and play,
Laugh and crow,
Shout and grow;
Jolly times have they!"

"What do they say in Baby-land?"
"Why the oddest things;
Might as well
Try to tell
What a birdie sings!"

"Who is Queen of Baby-land?"
"Mother, kind and sweet;
And her love,
Born above,
Guides the little feet."

GEORGE COOPER

BABY

Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into the here.

Where did you get those eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?
Some of the starry spikes left in.

Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high?
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?
I saw something better than any one knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get this pearly ear?
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands?
Love made itself into bonds and bands.

Feet, where did you come, you darling things?
From the same box as the cherubs' wings.

How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear?
God thought about you, and so I am here.

From *At the Back of the North Wind*
by GEORGE MACDONALD

THE BABY'S FUTURE

Dear Babe,* that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersèd vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in Himself.

From *Frost at Midnight*
by SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

* *Hartley Coleridge.*

"THOU, BABY INNOCENCE"

Thou, Baby Innocence!—unseen of me,
New bursting leaflet of the eternal tree,
That thou art sweet, is all I know of thee.

I know thou must be innocent and fair,
And dimpled soft as other babies are;
But then—what impress doth thy image bear?

Which most prevails, the mother or the sire?
Are thine eyes like thy father's—made of fire,
Keen to discern, and dauntless to inquire?

Or, like thy mother's, meek as summer eve,
Gracious in answer, open to receive,
Types of a soul most potent to believe?

Is thy chin cleft as sunny side of peach?
And have thy lips their own peculiar speech,
And murmurs that can chide, caress, beseech?

Thy little hands are busy,—that I know;
Thy tiny feet are fidging to and fro;
But what's the inner mood that stirs them so?

"THOU, BABY INNOCENCE"

Not knowing what thou art, I deem it meet
To think thee whatsoe'er I think most sweet,—
A bud of promise—yet a babe complete.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

ÉTUDE REALISTE

I

A baby's feet, like seashells pink,
  Might tempt, should heaven see meet,
An angel's lips to kiss, we think,
    A baby's feet.

Like rose-hued sea-flowers toward the heat
  They stretch and spread and wink
Their ten soft buds that part and meet.

No flower-bells that expand and shrink
  Gleam half so heavenly sweet,
As shine on life's untrodden brink
    A baby's feet.

II

A baby's hands, like rosebuds furled,
  Where yet no leaf expands,
Ope if you touch, though close upcurled,—
    A baby's hands.

Then, even as warriors grip their brands
  When battle's bolt is hurled,
They close, clenched hard like tightening bands.

No rosebuds yet by dawn impearled
  Match, even in loveliest lands,
The sweetest flowers in all the world,—
    A baby's hands.

III

A baby's eyes, ere speech begin,
  Ere lips learn words or sighs,
Bless all things bright enough to win
    A baby's eyes.

Love, while the sweet thing laughs and lies,
  And sleep flows out and in,
Sees perfect in them Paradise!

Their glance might cast out pain and sin,
  Their speech make dumb the wise,
By mute glad godhead felt within
    A baby's eyes.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

BABY SONG

My Baby is—a Baby,
  There are plenty to be seen,
And everybody's Baby
  Is the other Babies' queen.

Sing milk and silk and lavender,
  Sing cuddles, coos, and kisses,
Sing Baby lays in Baby ways,
  And such a song as this is!

They all have eyes like violets,
  And their pinky little toes
Are like ten dainty coral beads
  In two delightful rows.

Sing milk and silk and lavender,
  Sing cuddles, coos, and kisses,
Sing pink and blue, we think of you,
  And what a fine song this is!

They wear such darling little frocks,
  Their petticoats are woolly;
Their heads are fluffy little shocks,
  All ruffled and unruly.

Sing milk and silk and lavender,
Sing cuddles, coos, and kisses,
Sing Baby's frocks and Baby's locks,
And what a fine song this is!

They all clap hands and pat-a-cake,
Play "peep-bo" and "hot pies";
And "little pigs to market,"
And they all love lullabies.

Sing milk and silk and lavender,
Sing cuddles, coos, and kisses,
Sing little pigs and little jigs
And what a fine song this is!

And how they love "the blackbird
That" pops off Baby's "nose,"
Instead of that young maiden's
Who was "hanging out the clothes."

Sing milk and silk and lavender,
Sing cuddles, coos, and kisses,
Sing kings with money and queens with honey,
And what a fine song this is!

And when the Baby goes to sleep,
We stop the children's riot;
On careful tip-toe soft we creep,
And all the house is quiet.

Sing milk and silk and lavender,
  Sing cuddles, coos, and kisses,
Sing lullabies and hushabies,
  And dreams of Baby blisses.

ADA STOW

THE CRIB

I sought immortality
  Here and there—
I sent my rockets
  Into the air:
I gave my name
  A hostage to ink;
I dined a critic
  And bought him drink.

I spurned the weariness
  Of the flesh;
Denied fatigue
  And began afresh—
If men knew all
  How they would laugh!
I even planned
  My epitaph. . . .

And then one night
  When the dusk was thin,
I heard the nursery
  Rites begin:

I heard the tender
  Soothings said
Over a crib, and
  A small sweet head.

Then in a flash
  It came to me
That there was my
  Immortality!

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

"WHERE SHALL THE BABY'S DIMPLE BE?"

Over the cradle a mother hung,
  Softly crooning a slumber song;
And these were the simple words she sung
  All the evening long:

"Cheek or chin, or knuckle or knee,
  Where shall the baby's dimple be?
  Where shall the angel's finger rest
  When he comes down to the baby's nest?
  Where shall the angel's touch remain
  When he awakens my babe again?"

Still as she bent and sang so low,
  A murmur into her music broke;
And she paused to hear, for she could but know
  The baby's angel spoke.

"Cheek or chin, or knuckle or knee,
  Where shall the baby's dimple be?
  Where shall my finger fall and rest
  When I come down to the baby's nest?
  Where shall my finger's touch remain
  When I awaken your babe again?"

Silent the mother sat, and dwelt
Long in the sweet delay of choice;
And then by her baby's side she knelt,
And sang with pleasant voice:

"Not on the limb, O angel dear!
For the charm with its youth will disappear;
Not on the cheek shall the dimple be,
For the harboring smile will fade and flee;
But touch thou the chin with an impress deep,
And my baby the angel's seal shall keep."

JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND

BABY'S DIMPLES

Love goes playing hide-and-seek
Mid the roses on her cheek,
With a little imp of Laughter,
Who, the while he follows after,
Leaves the footprints that we trace
All about the Kissing-place.

JOHN BANISTER TABB

MOTHER-SONG

White little hands!
  Pink little feet!
Dimpled all over,
  Sweet, sweet, sweet!
What dost thou wail for?
  The unknown? the unseen?
The ills that are coming,
  The joys that have been?

Cling to me closer,
  Closer and closer,
Till the pain that is purer
  Hath banished the grosser.
Drain, drain at the stream, love,
  Thy hunger is freeing,
That was born in a dream, love,
  Along with thy being!

Little fingers that feel
  For their home on my breast,
Little lips that appeal
  For their nurture, their rest!

Why, why dost thou weep, dear?
Nay, stifle thy cries,
Till the dew of thy sleep, dear,
Lies soft on thine eyes.

From *Prince Lucifer* by ALFRED AUSTIN

BABY-PANTOMIME

Serene, he sits on other shores
  Than ours: with wide, unconscious lands
He holds strange speech, or, silent, pores
  On denizens of viewless strands;
On tablets of the air weird scores
  He writes, and makes, with eager hands
As strange erasements; then, two-fisted, stores
  An elfin hour-glass with heavenly sands.

PERCY MACKAYE

BABY'S WAY

If baby only wanted to, he could fly up to heaven this moment.

It is not for nothing that he does not leave us.

He loves to rest his head on mother's bosom, and cannot ever bear to lose sight of her.

Baby knows all manner of wise words, though few on earth can understand their meaning.

It is not for nothing that he never wants to speak.

The one thing he wants is to learn mother's words from mother's lips. That is why he looks so innocent.

Baby had a heap of gold and pearls, yet he came like a beggar on to this earth.

It is not for nothing that he came in such a disguise.

This dear little naked mendicant pretends to be utterly helpless, so that he may beg for mother's wealth of love.

Baby was so free from every tie in the land of the tiny crescent moon.

It was not for nothing he gave up his freedom.

He knows that there is room for endless joy in mother's little corner of a heart, and it is sweeter far than liberty to be caught and pressed in her dear arms.

Baby never knew how to cry. He dwelt in the land of perfect bliss.

It is not for nothing he has chosen to shed tears.

Though with the smile of his dear face he draws mother's yearning heart to him, yet his little cries over tiny troubles weave the double bond of pity and love.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

A BUNCH OF ROSES

The rosy mouth and rosy toe
  Of little baby brother,
Until about a month ago
  Had never met each other;
But nowadays the neighbors sweet,
  In every sort of weather,
Half way with rosy fingers meet,
  To kiss and play together.

JOHN BANISTER TABB

LITTLE HANDS

Soft little hands that stray and clutch,
Like fern fronds curl and uncurl bold,
While baby faces lie in such
Close sleep as flowers at night that fold,
What is it you would clasp and hold,
Wandering outstretched with wilful touch?
O fingers small of shell-tipped rose,
How should you know you hold so much?
Two full hearts beating you inclose,
Hopes, fears, prayers, longings, joys and woes,—
All yours to hold, O little hands!
More, more than wisdom understands
And love, love only knows.

LAURENCE BINYON

SKETCH OF A YOUNG LADY FIVE MONTHS OLD

October 10, 1836.

My pretty, budding, breathing flower,
  Methinks, if I to-morrow
Could manage, just for half an hour,
  Sir Joshua's brush to borrow,
I might immortalise a few
  Of all the myriad graces
Which Time, while yet they all are new,
  With newer still replaces.

I'd paint, my child, your deep blue eyes,
  Their quick and earnest flashes;
I'd paint the fringe that round them lies,
  The fringe of long dark lashes;
I'd draw with most fastidious care
  One eyebrow, then the other,
And that fair forehead, broad and fair,
  The forehead of your mother.

I'd oft retouch the dimpled cheek
  Where health in sunshine dances;

And oft the pouting lips, where speak
A thousand voiceless fancies;
And the soft neck would keep me long,
The neck, more smooth and snowy
Than ever yet in schoolboy's song
Had Caroline or Chloe.

Nor less on those twin rounded arms
My new-found skill would linger,
Nor less upon the rosy charms
Of every tiny finger;
Nor slight the small feet, little one,
So prematurely clever
That, though they neither walk nor run,
I think they'd jump for ever.

But then your odd endearing ways—
What study e'er could catch them?
Your aimless gestures, endless plays—
What canvas e'er could match them?
Your lively leap of merriment,
Your murmur of petition,
Your serious silence of content,
Your laugh of recognition.

Here were a puzzling toil, indeed,
For Art's most fine creations!—
Grow on, sweet baby; we will need,
To note your transformations,

SKETCH OF A YOUNG LADY FIVE MONTHS OLD

No picture of your form or face,
  Your waking or your sleeping,
But that which Love shall daily trace,
  And trust to Memory's keeping.

Hereafter, when revolving years,
  Have made you tall and twenty,
And brought you blended hopes and fears,
  And sighs and slaves in plenty,
May those who watch our little saint
  Among her tasks and duties,
Feel all her virtues hard to paint,
  As now we deem her beauties.

WINTHROP M. PRAED

IN A GARDEN

Baby, see the flowers!
  Baby sees
  Fairer things than these,
Fairer though they be than dreams of ours.

Baby, hear the birds!
  Baby knows
  Better songs than those,
Sweeter though they sound than sweetest words.

Baby, see the moon!
  Baby's eyes
  Laugh to watch it rise,
Answering light with love and night with noon.

Baby, hear the sea!
  Baby's face
  Takes a graver grace,
Touched with wonder what that sound may be.

Baby, see the star!
  Baby's hand
  Opens, warm and bland,
Calm in claim of all things fair that are.

Baby, hear the bells!
  Baby's head
  Bows as ripe for bed,
Now the flowers curl round and close their cells.

Baby, flower of light,
  Sleep and see
  Brighter dreams than we,
Till good-day shall smile away good-night.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

A RHYME OF ONE

You sleep upon your mother's breast,
  Your race begun,
A welcome, long a wished-for Guest,
  Whose age is One.

A Baby-Boy, you wonder why
  You cannot run;
You try to talk—how hard you try!—
  You're only One.

Ere long you won't be such a dunce:
  You'll eat your bun,
And fly your kite, like folk who once
  Were only One.

You'll rhyme and woo, and fight and joke,
  Perhaps you'll pun!
Such feats are never done by folk
  Before they're One.

Some day, too, you may have your joy,
  And envy none;
Yes, you, yourself, may own a Boy,
  Who isn't One.

He'll dance, and laugh, and crow; he'll do
As you have done:
(You crown a happy home, though you
Are only One.)

But when he's grown shall you be here
To share his fun,
And talk of times when he (the Dear!)
Was hardly One?

Dear Child, 'tis your poor lot to be
My little Son;
I'm glad, though I am old, you see,—
While you are One.

FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

A MOTHER TO HER WAKING INFANT

Now in thy dazzled, half-oped eye,
Thy curled nose and lip awry,
Uphoisted arms and noddling head,
And little chin with crystal spread,
Poor helpless thing! what do I see
That I should sing of thee?

From thy poor tongue no accents come,
Which can but rub thy toothless gum:
Small understanding boasts thy face;
Thy shapeless limbs nor step nor grace:
A few short words thy feats may tell;
And yet I love thee well.

When wakes the sudden bitter shriek
And redder swells thy little cheek;
When rattled keys thy woes beguile,
And through thine eyelids gleams the smile;
Still for thy weakly self is spent
Thy little silly plaint.

But when thy friends are in distress,
Thou'lt laugh and chuckle ne'ertheless;
Nor with kind sympathy be smitten

Though all are sad but thee and kitten;
Yet puny varlet that thou art,
Thou twitchest at the heart.

Thy smooth round cheek so soft and warm;
Thy pinky hand and dimpled arm;
Thy silken locks that scantly peep,
With gold-tipp'd ends, where circles deep,
Around thy neck in harmless grace
So soft and sleekly hold their place,
Might harder hearts with kindness fill,
And gain our right good will.

Each passing clown bestows his blessing,
Thy mouth is worn with old wives' kissing:
E'en lighter looks the gloomy eye
Of surly sense when thou art by;
And yet I think whoe'er they be,
They love thee not like me.

Perhaps when time shall add a few
Short months to thee, thou'lt love me too;
And after that, through life's long way,
Become my sure and cheering stay:
Wilt care for me and be my hold,
When I am weak and old.

Thou'lt listen to my lengthen'd tale,
And pity me when I am frail—

—But see! the sweepy, swimming fly,
Upon the window takes thine eye.
Go to thy little senseless play;
Thou dost not heed my lay.

JOANNA BAILLIE

ON A PICTURE OF AN INFANT PLAYING NEAR A PRECIPICE

While on a cliff with calm delight she kneels,
And the blue vales a thousand joys recall,
See, to the last, last verge her infant steals!
O, fly—yet stir not, speak not, lest it fall.—
Far better taught, she lays her bosom bare,
And the fond boy springs back to nestle there.

Translated from the Greek of Leonidas
of Alexandria by SAMUEL ROGERS

BABY

Dimpled and flushed and dewy pink he lies,
Crumpled and tossed and lapt in snowy bands;
Aimlessly reaching with his tiny hands,
Lifting in wondering gaze his great blue eyes.
Sweet pouting lips, parted by breathing sighs;
Soft cheeks, warm-tinted as from tropic lands;
Framed with brown hair in shining silken strands,—
All fair, all pure, a sunbeam from the skies!
O perfect innocence! O soul enshrined
In blissful ignorance of good or ill,
By never gale of idle passion crossed!
Although thou art no alien from thy kind,
Though pain and death may take thee captive, still
Through sin, at least, thine Eden is not lost.

ELAINE GOODALE EASTMAN

THE CUNNIN' LITTLE THING

When baby wakes of mornings,
  Then it's wake, ye people all!
    For another day
    Of song and play
  Has come at our darling's call!
And, till she gets her dinner,
  She makes the welkin ring,
And she *won't* keep still till she's had her fill—
  The cunnin' little thing!

When, baby goes a-walking,
  Oh, how her paddies fly!
    For that's the way
    The babies say
  To other folk "by-by";
The trees bend down to kiss her,
  And the birds in rapture sing,
As there she stands and waves her hands—
  The cunnin' little thing!

When baby goes a-rocking
  In her bed at close of day,

At hide-and-seek
On her dainty cheek
The dreams and the dimples play;
Then it's sleep in the tender kisses
The guardian angels bring
From the Far Above to my sweetest love—
You cunnin' little thing!

EUGENE FIELD

HOME FROM BUSINESS

Our little bud of Paradise
Is wakeful, Father. I suppose
His clever brain already knows
That if he bubbles long enough
His head will lean against the rough
Attraction of your overcoat.
The more I sing him lullabies,
The more persistently he tries
To tell me frankly to my face
That what he wants is Daddy's bass,
Especially the deepest note.
I heard you in the hall, and flew—
How lovely! This is mine for you!—
At once to disarrange your hair
And turn you into Baby's bear.
Now, while I set the cloth for tea
And make the toast, run up and be
A sleepy sound instead of me!

NORMAN GALE

PEACE

When from the wearying war of life
I seek release,
I look into my Baby's face,
And there find peace.

MARTHA FOOTE CROW

THE CHILD PLAYING WITH A WATCH

Art thou playing with Time in thy sweet baby-glee?
Will he pause on his pinions to frolic with thee?
Oh! show him those shadowless, innocent eyes,
That smile of bewilder'd and beaming surprise;
Let him look on that cheek where thy rich hair reposes,
Where dimples are playing "bopeep" with the roses;
His wrinkled brow press with light kisses and warm,
And clasp his rough neck with thy soft wreathing arm.
Perhaps thy bewitching and infantine sweetness
May win him, for once, to delay in his fleetness;
To pause ere he rifle, relentless in flight,
A blossom so glowing of bloom and of light.
Then, then would I keep thee, my beautiful child,
With thy blue eyes unshadow'd, thy blush undefiled;
With thy innocence only to guard thee from ill,
In life's sunny dawning, a lily-bud still!
Laugh on! my own Ellen! that voice, which to me
Gives a warning so solemn, makes music for thee;
And while I at those sounds feel the idler's annoy,

Thou hear'st but the tick of thy pretty gold toy;
Thou seest but a smile on the brow of the churl,
May his frown never awe thee, my own baby-girl.
And oh! may his step, as he wanders with thee,
Light and soft as thine own little fairy-tread be!
While still in all seasons, in storms and fair
weather,
May Time and my Ellen be playmates together.

FRANCES S. OSGOOD

THE FIRST TOOTH

Sister

Through the house what busy joy,
Just because the infant boy
Has a tiny tooth to show.
I have got a double row,
All as white, and all as small;
Yet no one cares for mine at all.
He can say but half a word,
Yet that single sound's preferred
To all the words that I can say
In the longest summer day.
He cannot walk, yet if he put
With mimic motion out his foot,
As if he thought he were advancing,
It's prizéd more than my best dancing.

Brother

Sister, I know, you jesting are,
Yet O, of jealousy beware.
If the smallest seed should be
In your mind of jealousy,

It will spring and it will shoot,
Till it bear the baneful fruit.
I remember you, my dear,
Young as is this infant here.
There was not a tooth of those
Your pretty even ivory rows,
But as anxiously was watched,
Till it burst its shell new hatched,
As if it a Phœnix were,
Or some other wonder rare.
So when you began to walk,—
So when you began to talk,—
As now, the same encomiums past.
'Tis not fitting this should last
Longer than our infant days;
A child is fed with milk and praise.

MARY LAMB

THE BABY AT TABLE

Seated I see the two again,
But not alone, they entertain
A little angel unaware,
With face as round as is the moon.
A royal guest with flaxen hair,
Who, throned before his lofty chair,
Drums on the table with his spoon,
Then drops it careless on the floor,
To grasp at things unseen before.
Are these celestial manners? These
The ways that win, the arts that please?
Ah, yes; consider well the guest,
And whatsoe'er he does seems best.
He ruleth by a right divine
Of helplessness, so lately born
In purple chambers of the morn,
As sovereign over thee and thine.
He speaketh not, and yet there lies,
A conversation in his eyes;
The golden silence of the Greek,
The gravest wisdom of the wise,
Not spoken in language, but in looks,

More legible than printed books.
As if he could but would not speak.
And now, oh monarch absolute!
Thy power is put to proof; for lo!
Resistless, fathomles, and slow,
The nurse comes rustling like the sea,
And pushes back thy chair, and thee,—
And so good-night to King Canute.

From *The Hanging of the Crane* by
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

A RHYME

Babe, if rhyme be none
  For that sweet small word
Babe, the sweetest one
  Ever heard,

Right it is and meet
  Rhyme should keep not true
Time with such a sweet
  Thing as you.

Meet it is that rhyme
  Should not gain such grace:
What is April's prime
  To your face?

What to yours is May's
  Rosiest smile? what sound
Like your laughter sways
  All hearts round?

None can tell in meter
  Fit for ears on earth
What sweet star grew sweeter
  At your birth.

Wisdom doubts what may be:
  Hope, with smile sublime,
Trusts: but neither, baby,
  Knows the rhyme.

Wisdom lies down lonely;
  Hope keeps watch from far;
None but one seer only
  Sees the star.

Love alone, with yearning
  Heart for astrolabe,
Takes the star's height, burning
  O'er the babe.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

TO MISS CHARLOTTE PULTENEY

In Her Mother's Arms, May 1, 1724.

Timely blossom, Infant fair,
Fondling of a happy pair,
Every morn and every night
Their solicitous delight,
Sleeping, waking, still at ease,
Pleasing without skill to please;
Little gossip, blithe and hale,
Tattling many a broken tale,
Singing many a tuneless song,
Lavish of a heedless tongue;
Simple maiden void of art,
Babbling out the very heart,
Yet abandon'd to thy will,
Yet imagining no ill,
Yet too innocent to blush;
Like the linnet in the bush,
To the mother-linnet's note
Moduling her slender throat;
Chirping forth thy pretty joys,
Wanton in the change of toys,

Like the linnet green, in May
Flitting to each bloomy spray;
Wearied then and glad of rest,
Like the linnet in the nest:—
This thy present happy lot,
This, in time, will be forgot:
Other pleasures, other cares,
Ever-busy Time prepares;
And thou shalt in thy daughter see
This picture, once, resembled thee.

AMBROSE PHILIPS

TO A VERY YOUNG LADY

Sweetest Bud of Beauty! may
No untimely frost decay
The early glories, which we trace
Blooming in thy matchless face.
But kindly opening, like the rose,
Fresh beauties, every day disclose;
Such as by Nature are not shown
In all the blossoms she has blown:
And then, what conquest shall you make;
Who hearts already daily take!
Scorched, in the morning with thy beams,
How shall we bear those sad extremes
Which must attend thy threatening eyes,
When thou shalt to thy noon arise?

SIR GEORGE ETHERAGE

MOTHER TO BABE

Fleck of sky you are,
Dropped through branches dark,
  O my little one, mine!
Promise of the star
Outpour of the lark;
  Beam and song divine.

See this precious gift,
Steeping in new birth
  All my being, for sign
Earth to Heaven can lift,
Heaven descend on earth,
  Both in one be mine!

Life in light you glass
Where you peep and coo,
  You my little one, mine!
Brooklet chirps to grass,
Daisy looks in dew
  Up to dear sunshine.

GEORGE MEREDITH

FOR A PROUD BABY

Flower of children, if you knew
  All the things you *might* be proud of!
Curls and dimples are a few
  Charms you have a gracious crowd of.

With your dark, delightful eyes
  You can break a heart or mend it.
I know you are not really wise,
  But how well you can pretend it!

Though your wickedness and wit
  Very clever in your sight be,
Yet you are not, I admit,
  As conceited as you might be.

ALINE KILMER

THE BACCHANTE TO HER BABE

Scherzo

Come, sprite, and dance! The sun is up,
The wind runs laughing down the sky
That brims with morning like a cup.
Sprite, we must race him,
We must chase him—
You and I!
And skim across the fuzzy heather—
You and joy and I together
Whirling by!

You merry little roll of fat!—
Made warm to kiss and smooth to pat,
And round to toy with, like a cub;
To put one's nozzle in and rub
And breathe you in like breath of kine,
Like juice of vine,
That sets my morning heart a-tingling,
Dancing, jingling,
All the glad abandon mingling
Of wind and wine!

Sprite, you are love and you are joy,
A happiness, a dream, a toy,
A god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,
The sun come down in tangled gold,
The moon to kiss, and spring to hold.

There was a time once, long ago,
Long—oh, long since . . . I scarcely know.
Almost I had forgot . . .
There was a time when you were not,
You merry sprite, save as a strain,
The strange, dull pain
Of green buds swelling
In warm straight dwelling
That must burst to the April rain.
A little heavy I was then,
And dull—and glad to rest. And when
The travail came
In searing flame . . .
But, sprite, that was so long ago!—
A century!—I scarcely know.
Almost I had forgot
When you were not.

So little sprite, come dance with me!
The sun is up, the wind is free!

Come now and trip it,
Romp and skip it,
Earth is young and so are we.
Sprite, you and I will dance together
On the heather;
Glad with all the procreant earth,
With all the fruitage of the trees,
And golden pollen on the breeze,
With plants that bring the grain to birth,

With beast and bird
Feathered and furred,
With youth and hope and life and love,
And joy thereof!
While we are part of all, we two—
For my glad burgeoning in you!

So merry little roll of fat
Made warm to kiss and smooth to pat
And round to toy with, like a cub,
To put one's nozzle in and rub,
My god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,
Come and dance beneath the sky,
You and I!
Look out with those round wondering eyes,
And squirm, and gurgle—and grow wise!

EUNICE TIETJENS

THE STORM-CHILD

My child came to me with the equinox,
The wild wind blew him to my swinging door,
With flakes of tawny foam from off the shore,
And shivering spindrift whirled across the rocks.
Flung down the sky, the wheeling swallow-flocks
Cried him a greeting, and the lordly woods,
Waving lean arms of welcome one by one,
Cast down their russet cloaks and golden hoods,
And bid their dancing leaflets trip and run
Before the tender feet of this my son.

Therefore the sea's swift fire is in his veins,
And in his heart the glory of the sea;
Therefore the storm-wind shall his comrade be,
That strips the hills and sweeps the cowering plains.
October, shot with flashing rays and rains,
Inhabits all his pulses; he shall know
The stress and splendor of the roaring gales,
The creaking boughs shall croon him fairy tales,
And the sea's kisses set his blood aglow,
While in his ears the eternal bugles blow.

MAY BYRON

HERSE

When grace is given us ever to behold
A child some sweet months old,
Love, laying across our lips his finger, saith,
Smiling, with bated breath,
Hush! for the holiest thing that lives is here,
And heaven's own heart how near!
How dare we, that may gaze not on the sun,
Gaze on this verier one?
Heart, hold thy peace; eyes, be cast down for shame;
Lips, breathe not yet its name.
In heaven they know what name to call it: we,
How should we know? For, see!
The adorable sweet living marvelous
Strange light that lightens us
Who gaze, desertless of such glorious grace,
Full in a babe's warm face!
All roses that the morning rears are naught,
All stars not worth a thought,
Set this one star against them, or suppose
As rival this one rose.

What price could pay with earth's whole weight of
gold
One least flushed roseleaf's fold
Of all this dimpling store of smiles that shine
From each warm curve and line,
Each charm of flower-sweet flesh, to re-illume
The dappled rose-red bloom
Of all its dainty body, honey-sweet
Clenched hands and curled-up feet,
That on the roses of the dawn have trod
As they came down from God,
And keep the flush and color that the sky
Takes when the sun comes nigh,
And keep the likeness of the smile their grace
Evoked on God's own face
When, seeing this work of his most heavenly mood,
He saw that it was good?
For all its warm sweet body seems one smile,
And mere men's love too vile
To meet it, or with eyes that worship dims
Read o'er the little limbs,
Read all the book of all their beauties o'er,
Rejoice, revere, adore,
Bow down and worship each delight in turn,
Laugh, wonder, yield, and yearn.
But when our trembling kisses dare, yet dread,
Even to draw nigh its head,

And touch, and scarce with touch or breath surprise
Its mild miraculous eyes
Out of their viewless vision—O, what then,
What may be said of men?
What speech may name a new-born child? what word
Earth ever spake or heard?
The best men's tongue that ever glory knew
Called that a drop of dew
Which from the breathing creature's kindly womb
Came forth in blameless bloom.
We have no word, as had those men most high,
To call a baby by.
Rose, ruby, lily, pearl of stormless seas—
A better word than these,
A better sign it was than flower or gem
That love revealed to them.
They knew that whence comes light or quickening flame,
Thence only this thing came,
And only might be likened of our love
To somewhat born above,
Not even to sweetest things dropped else on earth,
Only to dew's own birth.
Nor doubt we but their sense was heavenly true,
Babe, when we gaze on you,
A dew-drop out of heaven, whose colors are

More bright than sun or star,
As now, ere watching love dare fear or hope,
Lips, hands, and eyelids ope,
And all your life is mixed with earthly leaven.
O child, what news from heaven?

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

TO IANTHE

I love thee, Baby! for thine own sweet sake;
Those azure eyes, that faintly dimpled cheek,
Thy tender frame, so eloquently weak,
Love in the sternest heart of hate might wake;
But more when o'er thy fitful slumber bending
Thy mother folds thee to her wakeful heart,
Whilst love and pity, in her glances blending,
All that thy passive eyes can feel impart:
More, when some feeble lineaments of her,
Who bore thy weight beneath her spotless bosom,
As with deep love I read thy face, recur, —
More dear art thou, O fair and fragile blossom;
Dearest when most thy tender traits express
The image of thy mother's loveliness.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

MARGARET

This is the little Margaret
That dropped from the stars,
Her face is fair as those that look
Through golden bars
Down on the earth
At sunsetting.

Her brow is like some holy pearl
From the deep Indian sea,
Her eyes are only just less blue
Than they are true,
Violets all blue and dew.

Her hair is like some costly thing
From fairyland,
I dare not touch her golden hair
With the most reverent hand,
I dare not look into her eyes
With these of mine,
Lest I should sully those pure deeps,
Calm and divine.

Yet, little Margaret, were I to look
Long, long enough, who knows
But the pure light that flows
Up from your maiden soul
Through those pure wells,
Might with its gentle urgence
Wash my soul;
As men grow pure in reading some pure book,
And only sweetness may surround the rose.

O little Margaret
That dropped from the stars,
Some day the prince will come from fairyland,
And take your hand,
And lead you back once more
To all that fairyland from which you came,
To the strange seas so holy and so calm,
Where deep in the ocean of his love,
Your face, his pearl,
Shall feel his shadow o'er you,
Like some palm
That grows by the deep deep Indian sea,
And loves some pearl
Rocking and shimmering thousand leagues below;
And you shall go
Back to the flower-beds
Where grew your eyes,

And to those morning skies
From which you fell,
Our little Margaret
That dropped from the stars.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

THE INFANT M—M—

Unquiet childhood here by special grace
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower
That neither feeds nor wastes its vital power
In painful struggles. Months each other chase,
And naught untunes that Infant's voice; no trace
Of fretful temper sullies her pure cheek;
Prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet so meek
That one enrapt with gazing on her face
(Which even the placid innocence of death
Could scarcely make more placid, heaven more bright)
Might learn to picture, for the eye of faith,
The Virgin, as she shone with kindred light;
A nurseling couched upon her mother's knee,
Beneath some shady palm of Galilee.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

EDELWEISS

Child of the snowdrift and the storm!
In lands beyond the sea,
Type of the gentle and the pure,
My tribute is to thee.

By mountain crag and glacier's edge
Thy presence seems to bring
To those who toil along the steeps
The promise of the spring.

Thus, too, thou camest, little one,
Amid the winter's gloom,
And then, beyond, the promise dwelt,
Of bud and leaf and bloom.

Fair as the blossom of the Alps,
By weary pilgrims seen,
Sweeter than all the flowers that blow,
Is baby Madeleine.

WARREN PEASE

TO A CHILD

How shall I sing you, Child, for whom
So many lyres are strung;
Or how the only tone assume
That fits a Maid so young?

What rocks there are on either hand!
Suppose—'tis on the cards—
You should grow up with quite a grand
Platonic hate for bards!

How shall I then be shamed, undone,
For ah! with what a scorn
Your eyes must greet that luckless One
Who rhymed you, newly born,—

Who o'er your "helpless cradle" bent
His idle verse to turn;
And twanged his tiresome instrument
Above your unconcern!

Nay,—let my words be so discreet,
That, keeping Chance in view,

TO A CHILD

Whatever after fate you meet
A part may still be true.

Let others wish you mere good looks,—
Your sex is always fair;
Or to be writ in fortune's books,—
She's rich who has to spare:

I wish you but a heart that's kind,
A head that's sound and clear;
(Yet let the heart be not too blind,
The head not too severe!)

A joy of life, a frank delight;
A not-too-large desire;
And if you fail to find a knight
At least . . . a trusty Squire.

From *The Garland of Rachel* by
AUSTIN DOBSON

TO LILAMANI, ÆTAT 1.

Limpid jewel of delight
Severed from the tender night
Of your sheltering mother-mine,
Leap and sparkle, dance and shine,
Blithely and securely set
In love's magic coronet.
Living jewel, may you be
Laughter-bound and sorrow-free.

SAROJINI NAIDU

TO TOCHTERCHEN

As one doth touch a flower wherein the dew
Trembles to fall, as one unplaits the ply
Of morning gossamer, so tenderly
My spirit touches thine. Yet, daughter true
And fair, great Launcelot's mighty nerve and thew
Best clove a king or caught a butterfly,
(Since each extreme is perfect mastery
—Accurate cause repaid in the fine due
Of just effect—) and, child, it should be so
With Love. The same that nicely plundereth
The honeyed zephyrs for thy cates and wine
Should train thee with the tasks of toil and woe,
Or hold thee against adverse life and death,
Or give thee from my breast to dearer arms than
mine.

SYDNEY DOBELL

PHILIP, MY KING

Look at me with thy large brown eyes,
Philip, my King!
For round thee the purple shadow lies
Of babyhood's regal dignities.
Lay on my neck thy tiny hand,
With Love's invisible sceptre laden:
I am thine Esther, to command
Till thou shalt find thy queen-handmaiden,
Philip, my King!

O, the day when thou goest a-wooing,
Philip, my King!
When those beautiful lips are suing,
And, some gentle heart's bars undoing,
Thou dost enter, love-crowned, and there
Sittest all glorified!—rule kindly,
Tenderly, over thy kingdom fair;
For we that love, ah! we love so blindly,
Philip, my King!

I gaze from thy sweet mouth up to thy brow,
Philip, my King!

Ay! there lies the spirit, all sleeping now,
That may rise like a giant, and make men bow
As to one God-throned amid his peers.
My Saul! than thy brethren higher and fairer,
Let me behold thee in coming years.
Yet thy head needeth a circlet rarer,
Philip, my King—

A wreath, not of gold, but palm. One day,
Philip, my King!
Thou, too, must tread, as we tread, a way
Thorny, and bitter, and cold, and gray;
Rebels within thee, and foes without,
Will snatch at thy crown. But go on, glorious:
Martyr, yet monarch! till angels shout,
As thou sit'st at the feet of God victorious,
"Philip, the King!"

DINAH MARIA MULOCH CRAIK

ALICE

Of deepest blue of summer skies
Is wrought the heaven of her eyes.

Of that fine gold the autumns wear
Is wrought the glory of her hair.

Of rose leaves fashioned in the south
Is shaped the marvel of her mouth.

And from the honeyed lips of bliss
Is drawn the sweetness of her kiss,

'Mid twilight thrushes that rejoice
Is found the cadence of her voice,

Of winds that wave the western fir
Is made the velvet touch of her.

Of all earth's songs God took the half
To make the ripple of her laugh.

I hear you ask, "Pray who is she?"—
This maid that is so dear to me.

"A reigning queen in Fashion's whirl?"
Nay, nay! She is my baby girl.

HERBERT BASHFORD

BABY CHARLEY

He's fast asleep. See how, O Wife,
Night's finger on the lip of life
Bids whist the tongue, so prattle-rife,
Of busy Baby Charley.

One arm stretched backward round his head,
Five little toes from out the bed
Just showing, like five rosebuds red,
—So slumbers Baby Charley.

Heaven-lights, I know, are beaming through
Those lucent eyelids, veined with blue,
That shut away from mortal view
Large eyes of Baby Charley.

O sweet Sleep-Angel, thronèd now
On the round glory of his brow,
Wave thy wing and waft my vow
Breathed over Baby Charley.

I vow that my heart, when death is nigh,
Shall never shiver with a sigh
For act of hand or tongue or eye
That wronged my Baby Charley!

SIDNEY LANIER

BABY MINE

Baby mine, with the grave, grave face,
  Where did you get that royal calm,
Too staid for joy, too still for grace?
  I bend as I kiss your pink, soft palm.
Are you the first of a nobler race,
                Baby mine?

You come from the region of long ago,
  And gazing a while where the seraphs dwell
Has given your face a glory and glow.
  Of that brighter land have you aught to tell?
I seem to have known it; I more would know,
                Baby mine.

Your calm, blue eyes have a far-off reach.
  Look at me now with those wondrous eyes;
Why are we doomed to the gift of speech
  While you are silent and sweet and wise?
You have much to learn; you have more to teach,
                Baby mine.

FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

SONGS FOR FRAGOLETTA

I

Fragoletta, blessed one.
What think you of the light of the sun?
Do you think the dark was best,
Lying snug in mother's breast?
Ah! I knew that sweetness, too,
Fragoletta, before you!
But, Fragoletta, now you're born,
You must learn to love the morn,
Love the lovely working light,
Love the miracle of sight,
Love the thousand things to do—
Little girl, I envy you!—
Love the thousand things to see,
Love your mother, and—love me!
And some night, Fragoletta, soon,
I'll take you out to see the moon;
And for the first time, child of ours,
You shall—think of it!—look on flowers
And smell them, too, if you are good,
And hear the green leaves in the wood

Talking, talking, all together
In the happy windy weather;
And if the journey's not too far
For little limbs so lately made,
Limb upon limb like petals laid,
We'll go and picnic in a star.

II

Blue eyes, looking up at me,
I wonder what you really see,
Lying in your cradle there,
Fragrant as a branch of myrrh?
Helpless little hands and feet,
O so helpless! O so sweet!
Tiny tongue that cannot talk,
Tiny feet that cannot walk,
Nothing of you that can do
Aught, except those eyes of blue.
How they open, how they close!—
Eyelids of the baby-rose,
Open and shut—so blue, so wise,
Baby-eyelids, baby-eyes.

III

That, Fragoletta, is the rain
Beating upon the window-pane;

But lo! The golden sun appears,
To kiss away the window's tears.
That, Fragoletta, is the wind,
That rattles so the window-blind;
And yonder shining thing's a star,
Blue eyes—you seem ten times as far.
That, Fragoletta, is a bird
That speaks, yet never says a word;
Upon a cherry tree it sings,
Simple as all mysterious things;
Its little life to peck and pipe,
As long as cherries ripe and ripe,
And minister unto the need
Of baby-birds that feed and feed.
This, Fragoletta, is a flower,
Open and fragrant for an hour,
A flower, a transitory thing,
Each petal fleeting as a wing,
All a May morning blows and blows,
And then for everlasting goes.

IV

Blue eyes, against the whiteness pressed
Of little mother's hallowed breast,
The while your trembling lips are fed,
Look up at mother's bended head,

All benediction over you—
O blue eyes looking into blue!

Fragoletta is so small,
We wonder that she lives at all—
Tiny alabaster girl,
Hardly bigger than a pearl;
That is why we take such care,
Lest some one run away with her.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

HEE BALOU

Hee balou! my sweet wee Donald,
Picture o' the great Clanronald;
Brawlie kens our wanton chief
Wha got my young Highland thief.

Leeze me on thy bonnie craigie;
An' thou live, thou'll steal a naigie;
Travel the country thro' and thro',
And bring hame a Carlisle cow.

Thro' the Lawlands, o'er the border,
Weel, my babie, may thou furder;
Herry the louns o' the laigh countrie,
Syne to the Highlands hame to me.

ROBERT BURNS

A MOTHER TO A BABY

Where were you, Baby?
  Where were you, dear?
Even I have known you
  Only a year.

You were born, Baby,
  When I was born.
Twelve months ago you
  Left me forlorn.

Why did you leave me
  Heart of my heart?
Then I was all of you,
  Now but a part.

You lived while I lived,
  We two were one.
We two are two now
  While the days run.

When you can say, love,
  Baby, like me,
Think as I think, love,
  You on my knee:

A MOTHER TO A BABY

Every maid born, love,
  Womanly, mild,
Is in herself, love,
  Mother and child.

MARY E. COLERIDGE

FIRST FOOTSTEPS

A little way, more soft and sweet
  Than fields aflower with May,
A babe's feet, venturing, scarce complete
  A little way.

  Eyes full of dawning day
Look up for mother's eyes to meet,
  Too blithe for song to say.

Glad as the golden spring to greet
  Its first live leaflet's play,
Love, laughing, leads the little feet
  A little way.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

"WHAT SHALL WE WRAP THE BABY IN?"

What shall we wrap the baby in?
Silks are too coarse, and velvets too rough,
Snowiest linens not half white enough:
A web for his blanket what fairy can spin?
What shall we wrap the baby in?

The softest of colors may cover his bed,
Delicate hues of the sky and the rose,
Tints of all buds that in May-morns unclose,
When on the bosom of Sleep drops his head:—
Wrap him in something more heavenly, instead!

What shall we wrap the baby in?
Nothing that fingers have woven will do:
Looms of the heart weave love ever new:
Love, only love, is the right thread to spin,
Love we must wrap the baby in!

LUCY LARCOM

COUNTING BABY'S TOES

Dear little bare feet, dimpled and white,
In your long nightgown wrapped for the night;
Come, let me count all your queer little toes,
Pink as the heart of a shell or a rose.

One is a lady that sits in the sun;
Two is a baby, and *three* is a nun;
Four is a lily with innocent breast;
Five is a birdie asleep in its nest.

ANONYMOUS

TUCKING THE BABY IN

The dark-fringed eyelids slowly close
  On eyes serene and deep;
Upon my breast my own sweet child
  Has gently dropped to sleep;
I kiss his soft and dimpled cheek,
  I kiss his rounded chin,
Then lay him on his little bed,
  And tuck my baby in.

How fair and innocent he lies;
  Like some small angel strayed,
His face still warmed by God's own smile,
  That slumbers unafraid;
Or like some new embodied soul,
  Still pure from taint of sin—
My thoughts are reverent as I stoop
  To tuck my baby in.

What toil must stain these tiny hands
  That now lie still and white?
What shadows creep across the face
  That shines with morning light?

These wee pink shoeless feet—how far
  Shall go their lengthening tread,
Where they no longer cuddled close,
  May rest upon this bed?

O what am I that I should train
  An angel for the skies;
Or mix the patent draught that feeds
  The soul within these eyes?
I reach him up to the sinless Hands
  Before his cares begin, —
Great Father, with Thy folds of love,
  O tuck my baby in.

CURTIS MAY

LULLABIES

"And so good-night with lullabies"

SONG

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise:
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them lullaby.

Care is heavy, therefore sleep you,
You are care and care must keep you:
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them lullaby.

THOMAS DEKKER

A SWEET LULLABY

Come little babe, come silly soul,
Thy father's shame, thy mother's grief,
Born as I doubt to all our dole,
And to thyself unhappy chief:
  Sing lullaby, and lap it warm,
  Poor soul that thinks no creature harm.

Thou little think'st and less dost know
The cause of this thy mother's moan;
Thou want'st the wit to wail her woe,
And I myself am all alone:
  Why dost thou weep? why dost thou wail?
  And know'st not yet what thou dost ail.

Come, little wretch—ah, silly heart!
Mine only joy, what can I more?
If there be any wrong thy smart,
That may the destinies implore:
  'Twas I, I say, against my will,
  I wail the time, but be thou still.

And dost thou smile? O, thy sweet face!
Would God Himself He might thee see!—

No doubt thou wouldst soon purchase grace,
I know right well, for thee and me:
  But come to mother, babe, and play,
  For father false is fled away.

Sweet boy, if it by fortune chance
Thy father home again to send,
If death do strike me with his lance,
Yet mayst thou me to him commend:
  If any ask thy mother's name,
  Tell how by love she purchased blame.

Then will his gentle heart soon yield:
I know him of a noble mind:
Although a lion in the field,
A lamb in town thou shalt him find:
  Ask blessing, babe, be not afraid,
  His sugar'd words hath me betray'd.

Then mayst thou joy and be right glad;
Although in woe I seem to moan,
Thy father is no rascal lad,
A noble youth of blood and bone:
  His glancing looks, if he once smile,
  Right honest women may beguile.

Come, little boy, and rock asleep;
Sing lullaby and be thou still;
I, that can do naught else but weep,

Will sit by thee and wail my fill:
God bless my babe, and lullaby
From this thy father's quality.

NICHOLAS BRETON

SEPHESTIA'S LULLABY

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.
Mother's wag, pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy;
When thy father first did see
Such a boy by him and me,
He was glad, I was woe;
Fortune changèd made him so,
When he left his pretty boy,
Last his sorrow, first his joy.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.
Streaming tears that never stint,
Like pearl-drops from a flint,
Fell by course from his eyes,
That one another's place supplies;
Thus he grieved in every part,
Tears of blood fell from his heart,
When he left his pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.
The wanton smiled, father wept,
Mother cried, baby leapt;
More he crow'd, more we cried,
Nature could not sorrow hide:
He must go, he must kiss
Child and mother, baby-bliss,
For he left his pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy.
Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

From *Menaphon* by ROBERT GREENE

MY LITTLE SWEET DARLING, MY COMFORT AND JOY

My little sweet darling, my comfort and joy,—
Sing lully by, lully!
In beauty excelling the princess of Troy,—
Sing lully by, lully!
Now suck, child, and sleep, child, thy mother's
sweet boy,
The gods bless and keep thee from cruel annoy;
Thy father, sweet infant, from mother is gone,
And she in the woods here, with thee left alone.
To thee, little infant, why do I make moan,—
Sing lully, lully!
Sith thou canst not help me to sigh nor to groan,
Sing lully, lully, lully!
Sweet baby, lully by, sweet baby, lully, lully!

MS. temp. JAMES I.

A CRADLE HYMN

Hush! my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed!
Heavenly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe; thy food and raiment,
House and home thy friends provide;
All without thy care or payment:
All thy wants are well supplied.

How much better thou'rt attended
Than the Son of God could be,
When from heaven He descended
And became a child like thee!

Soft and easy is thy cradle:
Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay,
When His birthplace was a stable
And His softest bed was hay.

Blessèd babe! what glorious features—
Spotless fair, divinely bright!
Must He dwell with brutal creatures?
How could angels bear the sight?

Was there nothing but a manger
  Cursèd sinners could afford
To receive the heavenly stranger?
  Did they thus affront their Lord?

Soft, my child: I did not chide thee,
  Though my song might sound too hard;
'Tis thy mother sits beside thee,
  And her arms shall be thy guard.

Yet to read the shameful story
  How the Jews abused their King,
How they served the Lord of Glory,
  Makes me angry while I sing.

See the kinder shepherds round Him,
  Telling wonders from the sky!
Where they sought Him, there they found Him,
  With His Virgin mother by.

See the lovely babe a-dressing;
  Lovely infant, how He smiled!
When He wept, the mother's blessing
  Soothed and hushed the holy child.

Lo, He slumbers in His manger,
  Where the hornèd oxen fed;
Peace, my darling, here's no danger,
  Here's no ox anear thy bed.

'Twas to save thee, child, from dying,
Save my dear from burning flame,
Bitter groans and endless crying,
That thy blest Redeemer came.

May'st thou live to know and fear Him,
Trust and love Him all thy days;
Then go dwell forever near Him,
See His face, and sing His praise.

ISAAC WATTS

CRADLE SONG

Sleep! Sleep! beauty bright,
Dreaming o'er the joys of night;
Sleep! Sleep! in thy sleep
Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet Babe, in thy face
Soft desires I can trace,
Secret joys and secret smiles,
Little pretty infant wiles.

As thy softest limbs I feel,
Smiles as of the morning steal
O'er thy cheek and o'er thy breast
Where thy little heart does rest.

O! the cunning wiles that creep
In thy little heart asleep.
When thy little heart does wake
Then the dreadful lightnings break.

From thy cheek and from thy eye
O'er the youthful harvests nigh!
Infant wiles and infant smiles
Heaven and Earth of peace beguiles.

WILLIAM BLAKE

FOLK LULLABIES

English

Bye, baby bunting,
Daddy's gone a-hunting,
To get a little rabbit skin
To wrap the baby bunting in.

Rock-a-bye, baby,
  On the tree top,
When the wind blows
  The cradle will rock;
When the bough breaks
  The cradle will fall,
Down will come baby,
  Bough, cradle, and all.

Rock-a-bye, baby, thy cradle is green;
Father's a nobleman, mother's a queen;
And Betty's a lady, and wears a gold ring;
And Johnny's a drummer, and drums for the king.

  Bye, O, my baby,
  When I was a lady,

O, then my poor baby didn't cry;
But my baby is weeping
For want of good keeping,
O, I fear my poor baby will die.

Danish

Lullaby, sweet baby mine!
Mother spins the threads so fine;
Father o'er the long bridge's gone,
Shoes he'll buy for little John.
Pretty shoes with buckles bright.
Sleep, baby mine, now sleep all night!

Dutch

So ride the fine lords with their plumes and their swords,
So ride the proud dames with their long, silken trains;
And so, so jolts the farmer's cart,
When with his team he drives to mart.
See, how my baby, too, can ride!

Breton

Go to sleep, you poor little darling,
Go to sleep, dear little Pierrot!
I'll sing sweet and low,
And rock to and fro

The crib of Pierrot,
Whom we all love so.
Go to sleep, you poor little darling,
Go to sleep, dear little Pierrot!

Mamma is below,
She's kneading the dough
For cakes for Pierrot,
Whom we all love so
Go to sleep, you poor little darling,
Go to sleep, dear little Pierrot!

Papa's out to row
And when he comes—oh!
A boat he will show,
That he made for Pierrot!
Go to sleep, you poor little darling,
Go to sleep, dear little Pierrot!

Spanish

Slumber, slumber, darling, the old mocking-bird is singing:
Hicho, chimicho, hicho, chimicho; tuma caro, tuma caro, bimbambam!

The moon shines bright and the snake darts swift and light;
I see five baby bullocks, and a calf, young and white.

The moon was a-chewing a mellow Indian fig;
The sun was gobbling a cabbage big.

And out in the hallway the Virgin sits alone,
Sewing a cloak for our dear Lord, her son.

Cuban

Hush, my darling, sleep quickly,
For there comes the black man,
Who will eat all little children that lie awake.
Hush, my darling, sleep quickly!
Hush, my baby, sleep quickly!

Russian

Lullaby, my pretty baby,
Close thine eyes so bright,
While the moon pours o'er thy cradle
All her silv'ry light,
I will tell thee tales of faeries,
Lull thee with a song,
While the moon, heaven's lonely wand'rer,
Creeps the sky along.

Chinese

The mouse ran up the candle-stick
To eat the grease from off the wick.
When he got up, he could not get down,
But squeaked to waken all the town:
Mamma! Mamma!

Snail, snail, come out and be fed,
Put out your horns and then your head,
And your Papa and your Mamma
  Will give you boiled mutton.

Japanese

Sleep, sleep, on the floor, oh! be good and slumber;
For when thou art asleep
Just hear, what I shall do, dear.
Far o'er the mountain will I go and buy thee
All sorts of pretty toys
And bring them home to baby.
And when thou early wak'st tomorrow morning,
Thou shalt eat red beans and fish, my baby.

NORTH GERMAN CRADLE SONG

Sleep, baby, sleep!
Thy father's watching the sheep,
Thy mother's shaking the dreamland tree,
And down drops a little dream for thee.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Sleep, baby, sleep!
The large stars are the sheep,
The little stars are the lambs, I guess,
The bright moon is the shepherdess.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Sleep, baby, sleep!
And cry not like a sheep,
Else the sheep-dog will bark and whine,
And bite this naughty child of mine.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Sleep, baby, sleep!
Thy Saviour loves His sheep;
He is the Lamb of God on high
Who for our sakes came down to die.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Sleep, baby, sleep!
Away to tend the sheep,
Away, thou sheep-dog fierce and wild,
And do not harm my sleeping child!
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Translated by ELIZABETH PRENTISS

SYRIAN LULLABY

Sleep, little moon of my delight,
  My damask rose.
Thine eyes—twin pools of light,
  Now softly close.

Sleep warm, my arms will shelter thee,
  My wee sweetmeat,
Grow tall, my straight young cypress tree,
  Be strong and fleet.

Sleep sweet, thou wilt be wise and good,
  My brave gazelle,
Thy cradle is of sandlewood,
  Small dove, sleep well!

ALICE HATHAWAY CUNNINGHAM

HINDU CRADLE SONG

From groves of spice,
O'er fields of rice,
Athwart the lotus-stream,
I bring for you,
Aglint with dew
A little lovely dream.

Sweet, shut your eyes,
The wild fire-flies
Dance through the fairy *neem;*
From the poppy-vale
For you I stole
A little lovely dream.

Dear eyes, good-night,
In golden light
The stars around you gleam;
On you I press
With soft caress
A little lovely dream.

SAROJINI NAIDU

JAPANESE CRADLE SONGS

I

Sleep, my love, your way of dream
By the fireflies shall be lighted,
That I gather from the heart of night.
Your father is off, good-night,
To buy the honey from the stars:
The city of stars is away a hundred miles.
But by the dawn he will return,
Riding on the horse of the dews,
For you, with a drum as big as the sun.

II

The flowers are nodding
Above your head;
The flowers are made with sorrows seven,
And laughters three which are the best.

The sorrows seven your mother keeps,
(Mother's way is that of pain,)
But the laughters three make you fair and gay,
I rock you, fairy boat on the tide of love.

Sleep, my own, till the bell of dusk
Bring the stars laden with a dream;
With that dream you shall awake
Between the laughters and song.

YONE NOGUCHI

SWEDISH MOTHER'S LULLABY

There sitteth a dove, so fair and white,
  All on a lily spray;
And she listeneth how to the Saviour above
  The little children pray.

Lightly she spreads her friendly wings,
  And to heaven's gate hath sped,
And unto the Father in heaven she bears
  The prayers the children have said.

And back she comes from heaven's gate,
  And brings—that dove so mild—
From the Father in heaven, who hears her speak,
  A blessing for every child.

FREDERIKA BREMER

A HIGHLAND CROON

Hush-a-ba, birdie, croon, croon,
Hush-a-ba, birdie, croon.
The sheep are gane to the siller wood,
And the cows are gane to the broom, broom.

And it's braw milking the kye, kye,
It's braw milking the kye,
The birds are singing, the bells are ringing,
And the wild deer come galloping by, by.

And hush-a-ba birdie, croon, croon,
Hush-a-ba, birdie, croon.
The gaits are gane to the mountain hie,
And they'll no be hame till noon, noon.

AULD DADDY DARKNESS

Auld Daddy Darkness creeps frae his hole,
Black as a blackamoor, blin' as a mole:
Stir the fire till it lawes, let the bairnie sit,
Auld Daddy Darkness is no wantit yit.

See him in the corners hidin' frae the licht,
See him at the window gloomin' at the night;
Turn up the gas licht, close the shutters a',
An' Auld Daddy Darkness will flee far awa'.

Awa' to hide the birdie within its cosy nest,
Awa' to lap the wee flooers on their mither's breast,
Awa' to loosen Gaffer Toil, frae his daily ca',
For Auld Daddy Darkness is kindly to a'.

He comes when we're weary to wean's frae oor waes,
He comes when the bairnies are getting aff their claes;
To cover them sae cosy, an' bring bonnie dreams,
So Auld Daddy Darkness is better than he seems.

Steek yer een, my wee tot, ye'll see Daddy then;
He's in below the bed claes, to cuddle ye he's fain;
Noo nestle to his bosie, sleep an' dream yer fill,
Till Wee Davie Daylicht comes keekin' owre the hill.

JAMES FERGUSON

ROCK HIM TILL HE GROWS A MANNIE

Cuddle doon an' sleep fu' soun',
  Mammy's bairnie saft an' cosie;
Pit ae han' my neck aroun',
  An' the ither in my bozie.
There now, sleep while mammie sings
  That bit sang, fu' lown an' cannie—
Hoo a fairy every nicht
  Rocks him till he grows a mannie!

Just when he begins to sleep,
  In she comes—that dumpy fairy—
Askin' wi' auld-fashion'd look,
  "Let me try the wean to carry!"
But I shake my heid an' say,
  "Mammy daurna trust her bairnie
Wi' a thing sae licht as you;
  First grow bigger an' she'll learn ye!"

Then I draw the creddle near,
  Pit him in, while sweet an' simple,
She gets up upon the stule,
  An' raxes doon to kiss his dimple;

After this she starts an' sings,
As she rocks an' swings the creddle,
Sic a sang, sae lown an' sweet,
I daurna speak a word or meddle!

What that sang can mean, ava,
Dim an' riddle-like in seemin',
Nane kens but this bairnie here,
For he smiles an' starts the dreamin',
Then that fairy, keekin' ow'r,
Seein' this, sings laigh an' cannie,
"Rock him saft, an' rock him aft,
Till he grows a great big mannie!"

Then her sang begins to turn
Saft an' wae, as if entreatin',
Though I dinna ken a word,
Yet I maist fa' to the greetin',
But the weanie still smiles on,
Liftin' up a wee fat han'ie,
Which the fairy kissin' cries,
"Bairnie, sleep an' grow a mannie."

So he sleeps the hale nicht lang,
Waukin' up fu' gleg an' smilin',
For he min's the fairy's sang,
An' the dreams that cam' beguilin';

But the meanin' o' the sang
  That a carefu' mither misses,
This bit laddie winna tell,
  Though she gi'es him fifty kisses.

Ay, the sleep that comes when we
  Are weans, an' rockit by oor fairy,
Fa's upon us saft as dew
  Frae heaven's threshold high and airy;
Then we ken the mystic sang,
  An' the forms we see when dreamin',
Pity that we miss them a'
  When we grow to men and women.

ALEXANDER ANDERSON

LULLABY

Baloo, loo, lammy, now baloo, my dear,
Does wee lammy ken that its daddy's no here?
Ye're rocking full sweetly on mammy's warm knee,
But daddy's a' rocking upon the salt sea.

Now hushaby, lammy, now hushaby, dear;
Now hushaby, lammy, for mother is near.
The wild wind is raving, and mamma's heart's sair;
The wild wind is raving, and ye dinna care.

Sing baloo, loo lammy, sing baloo, my dear;
Sing baloo, loo lammy, for mother is here.
My wee bairnie's dozing, it's dozing now fine,
And O may its wakening be blither than mine!

CAROLINA, LADY NAIRNE

WILLIE WINKIE

Wee Willie Winkie rins through the town,
Upstairs and doon stairs, in his nicht-gown,
Tirlin' at the window, cryin' at the lock,
"Are the weans in their bed?—for it's noo ten
o'clock!"

Hey, Willie Winkie! are ye comin' ben?
The cat's singin' gay thrums to the sleepin' hen,
The doug's speldered on the floor, and disna gie a
cheep;
But here's a wankrife laddie, that winna fa' asleep.

Onything but sleep, ye rogue!—glowrin' like the
moon,
Rattlin' in an airn jug wi' an airn spoon,
Rumblin', tumblin', roun' about, crawin' like a
cock,
Skirlin' like a kenna-what—wauknin' sleepin' folk!

Hey, Willie Winkie! the wean's in a creel!
Waumblin' aff a bodie's knee like a vera eel,
Ruggin' at the cat's lug, and ravellin' a' her thrums:
Hey, Willie Winkie!—see, there he comes!

WILLIAM MILLER

SCOTCH CRADLE SONG

Baloo, baloo, my wee, wee thing,
Oh softly close thy blinkin' e'e;
Baloo, baloo, my wee, wee thing,
For thou art doubly dear to me.

Thy daddie now is far awa'
A sailor laddie o'er the sea,
But Hope aye hechts his safe return,
To you, my bonnie lamb, an' me.

Baloo, baloo, my wee, wee thing,
Oh softly close thy blinkin' e'e;
Baloo, baloo, my wee, wee thing,
For thou art doubly dear to me.

Thy face is simple, sweet, and mild,
Like ony simmer e'enin' fa',
Thy sparklin' e'e is bonnie black,
Thy neck is like the mountain snaw.

Baloo, baloo, my wee, wee thing,
Oh softly close thy blinkin' e'e;
Baloo, baloo, my wee, wee thing,
For thou art doubly dear to me.

O but thy daddie's absence long
Might break my dawie heart in two,
Wert thou na left a dawtit pledge
To steal the eerie hours awa'.

RICHARD GALL

LULLABY OF AN INFANT CHIEF

O hush thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,
Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright;
The woods and the glens, from the towers which we
see,
They are all belonging, dear babie, to thee.
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo.

O, fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;
Their bows would be bended, their blades would be
red,
Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo.

O hush thee, my babie, the time soon will come
When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and
drum;
Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you
may,
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with
day.
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

EAST COAST LULLABY

Day has barred her windows close, and gangs wi' quiet feet;
Nicht, wrapt in coat o' grey, steals saftly doon the street;
Birdies deep in feathered nest bid the warld adieu—
Lullaby and lullaloo; sleep, lammie, noo!

One by one the glimmerin' een aboot the harbour dark,
Wink and blink an' fa' to gloom; scarce is left a spark.
Ne'er a thing but wind and waves'll moan the lang nicht through—
Lullaby and lullaloo; sleep, lammie, noo!

Frae the sea the wind blaws wild like a pibroch shrill;
Grant the Lord there's naught to fear, naught o' wae or ill!
When ye're grown my heart'll ache, sonnie, jist for you—
Lullaby and lullaloo; sleep, lammie, noo!

Will ye sail awa' at dawn, to net the herrin' fine?
Will ye track the monster whale yon where north-
lichts shine?
Mither-heart's a bonnie star, steady, clear, and
true—
Lullaby and lullaloo; sleep, lammie, noo!

LADY LINDSAY

GOING A-HUNTING

My Molly bawn, as white as lawn,
As sweet as sugar candy,
In floating frock and snowy sock
Today you're quite a dandy!
Come here, come here to father dear,
For he at last has leisure
To rest an hour within your power,
You tiny toddling creature.

Come one, two, three, upon my knee
Fly up, my baby bunting;
And tally ho! away we'll go
With all the hounds a-hunting.
O, here's a gate, but we'll not wait
But pop our pony's over!
And here's a ditch! but raise your switch
And crack! we're in the clover.

Come Molly bawn to father dear,
Come on my baby bunting,
As tally ho! away we go
With all the hounds a-hunting.

Till in the rocks, the cruel fox
Is killed by Dick and Dolly,
And Peter Plush cuts off the brush
And hands it here to Molly.

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES

IRISH LULLABY

I'd rock my own sweet childie to rest in a cradle of
gold on a bough of the willow,
To the shoheen ho! of the wind of the west and the
lulla lo! of the soft sea billow.
Sleep, baby dear,
Sleep without fear,
Mother is here beside your pillow.

I'd put my own sweet childie to float in a silver boat
on the beautiful river,
Where a shoheen! whisper the white cascades, and a
lulla lo! the green flags shiver.
Sleep, baby dear,
Sleep without fear,
Mother is here with you for ever.

Shoheen ho! to the rise and fall of mother's bosom
'tis sleep has bound you,
And, oh, my child, what cosier nest for rosier rest
could love have found you?
Sleep, baby dear,
Sleep without fear,
Mother's two arms are clasped around you.

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES

A MOUNTAINY WOMAN'S CROONING

Little gold head, my house's candle,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft, my baby,)
You will guide all wayfarers on this mountain,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft till dawn.)

Little soft mouth that my breast has known,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft, my baby,)
Mary will kiss you as she passes,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft till dawn.)

Little round cheek, O silk of the thistle,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft, my baby,)
Jesus will lay his hand upon you,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft till dawn.)

Mary's kiss on my child's red mouth,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft, my baby,)
Christ's little hand on my baby's cheek,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft till dawn.)

House, be still, and ye little grey mice,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft, my baby,)
Lie close, lie close, lest ye break his slumber,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft till dawn.)

Little moths on the window, fold your wings,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft, my baby,)
Little black chafers, silence your humming,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft till dawn.)

Plovers and curlews, if ye stir tonight,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft, my baby,)
Do not cry as ye pass o'er this house,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft till dawn.)

Things of the mountain that wake in the night-time,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft, my baby,)
Be still, be still, for my little one sleeps,
(Sleep O! Sleep soft till dawn.)

P. H. PEARSE, *from his own Irish version*

LULLABY

Lennavan-mo,
Lennavan-mo,
Who is it swinging you to and fro,
With a long low swing and a sweet low croon,
And the loving words of the mother's rune?

Lennavan-mo,
Lennavan-mo,
Who is it swinging you to and fro?
I am thinking it is an angel fair,
The Angel that looks on the gulf from the lowest
stair
And swings the green world upward by its leagues
of sunshine hair.

Lennavan-mo,
Lennavan-mo,
Who swingeth you and the Angel to and fro?
It is He whose faintest thought is a world afar,
It is He whose wish is a leaping seven-moon'd star,
It is He, Lennavan-mo,
To whom you and I and all things flow.

Lennavan-mo,
Lennavan-mo,
It is only a little wee lass you are, Eilidh-mo-chree,
But as this wee blossom has roots in the depths of
the sky,
So you are at one with the Lord of Eternity—
Bonnie wee lass that you are,
My morning-star,
Eilidh-mo-chree, Lennavan-mo, Lennavan-mo.

"FIONA MACLEOD" (William Sharp)

A CRADLE SONG

The angels are stooping
Above your bed;
They weary of trooping
With the whimpering dead.

God's laughing in heaven
To see you so good;
The Shining Seven
Are gay with His mood.

I kiss you and kiss you,
My pigeon, my own;
Ah, how I shall miss you
When you have grown.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

LULLABY

Husheen, the herons are crying
Away in the rain and the sleet,
Flying and flying and flying,
With never a rest for their feet.

But warm in your coverlid nestle,
Wee Bird, till the dawn of the day,
Nor dream of the wild wings that wrestle
In the night and the rain and the grey.

Come, sweetheart, the bright ones would bring you
By the magical meadows and streams,
With the light of your dreaming they build you
A house on the hill of your dreams.

But you stir in your sleep and you murmur
As though the wild rain and the grey
Wet hills with the wind ever blowing
Had driven your dreams away.

And dearer the wind in its crying,
And the secrets the wet hills hold,
Than the goldenest place they could find you
In the heart of a country of gold.

SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN

SHO-HEEN SHO

I would put my child to slumber, my own—and yet
not so—
As the wives of clowns may do it, as the babes of
clowns may go,
Beneath a yellow blanket, beneath a sheet of tow;
But in a golden cradle, that the wind rocks to and
fro.

Sho-heen sho, hoo lo lo,
Sho-heen sho, you are my child,
Sho-heen sho, hoo lo lo,
Sho-heen sho, and you are my child!

I would put my child to slumber—and this must be
the way,
Between two Christmas seasons, on a bright and
sunny day;
And in a golden cradle and upon a level floor,
Beneath the tree-tops lofty, that the wind rocks
evermore.

Sho-heen sho, hoo lo lo,
Sho-heen sho, you are my child,
Sho-heen sho, hoo lo lo,
Sho-heen sho, and you are my child!

Then sleep, my child, and may it the sleep of safety be,
And may you from this slumber arise in health and glee;
May neither death-stitch seize you, nor ugly small-pox strike,
Nor any infants' sickness, dire colic, and their like!
Sho-heen sho, hoo lo lo,
Sho-heen sho, you are my child,
Sho-heen sho, hoo lo lo,
Sho-heen sho, and you are my child!

Then sleep my child, and be it sweet sleep and safe to thee,
And may you from this slumber arise in health and glee;
From dreams of pain and sorrow, oh! may your heart be free,
And may your mother never a son-less woman be!
Sho-heen sho, hoo lo lo,
Sho-heen sho, you are my child,
Sho-heen sho, hoo lo lo,
Sho-heen sho, and you are my child!

ALMA STRETTELL

(*Versified from Owen M. Edwards' literal translation of the ancient Irish song.*)

THE HUSHING SONG

Eilidh Eilidh,
My bonnie wee lass,
The winds blow,
And the hours pass!

But never a wind
Can do thee wrong,
Brown Birdeen, singing
Thy bird-heart song!

And never an hour
But has for thee
Blue of the heaven
And green of the sea.

Blue for the hope of thee,
Eilidh, Eilidh!
Green for the joy of thee,
Eilidh, Eilidh!

Swing in thy nest, then,
Here on my heart,
Birdeen, Birdeen,
Here on my heart!
Here on my heart!

"FIONA MACLEOD" (William Sharp)

RHYME OF THE COVERLET

Rockaby, rockaby,
  Winter's in town—
Cover the baby up warm.
  Under a drift of white wool soft as down
What will he know of the storm?

Rockaby, rockaby,
  Springtime is near.
When baby goeth to sleep
  Under this blossomy coverlet, dear,
Let not a chill wind creep.

Rockaby, rockaby,
  Summer unbars—
Cover the baby aright.
  Under a canopy sprinkled with stars
What will he know of the night?

Rockaby, rockaby,
  Autumn is bold —
Cover him up like a king:
  Robes of purple and cloth of gold;
Tribute and service bring.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR LORD

CRADLE SONG

What is the little one thinking about?
Very wonderful things, no doubt!
  Unwritten history!
  Unfathomed mystery!
Yet he laughs and cries, and eats and drinks,
And chuckles and crows, and nods and winks,
As if his head were as full of kinks
And curious riddles as any sphinx!
  Warped by colic, and wet by tears,
  Punctured by pins, and tortured by fears,
  Our little nephew will lose two years;
    And he'll never know
    Where the summers go;—
He need not laugh for he'll find it so!

Who can tell what a baby thinks?
Who can follow the gossamer links
  By which the manniken feels his way
Out from the shore of the great unknown,
Blind, and wailing, and alone,
    Into the light of day?—
Out from the shore of the unknown sea,
Tossing in pitiful agony;—
Of the unknown sea that rolls and rolls,

Spécked with the barks of little souls,—
Barks that were launched on the other side,
And slipped from Heaven on an ebbing tide!
What does he think of his mother's eyes?
What does he think of his mother's hair?
What of the cradle-roof that flies
Forward and backward through the air?
What does he think of his mother's breast,
Bare and beautiful, smooth and white,
Seeking it ever with fresh delight,—
Cup of his life, and couch of his rest?
What does he think when her quick embrace
Presses his hand and buries his face
Deep where the heart-throbs sink and swell
With a tenderness she can never tell,
Though she murmur the words
Of all the birds,—
Words she has learned to murmur well?
Now he thinks he'll go to sleep!
I can see the shadow creep
Over his eyes, in soft eclipse,
Over his brow, and over his lips,
Out to his little finger-tips!
Softly sinking, down he goes!
Down he goes! down he goes!
See! he is hushed in sweet repose.

From *Bitter-Sweet* by JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND

LULLABY

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

From *The Princess* by ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

THE SLUMBER BOAT

Baby's boat's the silver moon,
  Sailing in the sky,
Sailing o'er the sea of sleep,
While the clouds float by.
  Sail, baby, sail,
  Out upon that sea,
Only don't forget to sail
  Back again to me.

Baby's fishing for a dream,
  Fishing near and far,
His line a silver moonbeam is,
His bait a silver star.
  Sail, baby, sail,
  Out upon that sea,
Only don't forget to sail
  Back again to me.

ALICE C. D. RILEY

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LULLABY

Hush-a-bye, hush-a-bye, little feet, go
Down the cool slopes where the dream-flowers grow,
Down to the stream where the sleep zephyrs blow,
Low—ah, low—
Lighter than snow,
Brushing the slumber-dews, little feet, go.

Hush-a-bye, hush-a-bye, shut, little eyes;
Home to her nestlings the sparrow-bird flies;
Now with her cuddled lamb, stilling its cries,
Lies—ah, lies
Under the skies
The wooly ewe-mother; shut, shut, little eyes.

Hush-a-bye, hush-a-bye, little one, sleep;
Now the moon-shepherdess, bare-foot Bo-peep,
Leads all her starry flock up the blue steep;
Sweep—ah, sweep—
Out to the deep,
Dearest of voyagers; little one, sleep.

JAMES B. KENYON

A NURSERY HOUR

Up and down, up and down,
Baby's riding on my knee,
Crumpling up my silken gown
In her glee, in her glee;
Striking with her rosy fists,
Striving with her tiny wrists.

Trot my nag, trot my nag,
Baby rides more gently now;
All her ardor seems to lag,
Lay her low, lay her low;
Let her steed unbridled be,
Baby sleeps upon my knee.

LADY LINDSAY

TROT, TROT!

Every evening Baby goes
  Trot, trot, to town,
Across the river, through the fields,
  Up hill and down.

Trot, trot, the Baby goes,
  Up hill and down,
To buy a feather for her hat,
  To buy a woolen gown.

Trot, trot, the Baby goes;
  The birds fly down, alack!
"You cannot have our feathers, dear,"
  They say, "so please trot back."

Trot, trot, the Baby goes;
  The lambs come bleating near.
"You cannot have our wool," they say,
  "But we are sorry, dear."

Trot, trot, the Baby goes,
  Trot, trot, to town;
She buys a red rose for her hat,
  She buys a cotton gown.

MARY F. BUTTS

SONG FOR A BABE

Little babe, while burns the west,
Warm thee, warm thee, in my breast,
While the moon doth shine her best,
And the dews distil not.

All the land so sad, so fair—
Sweet its toils are, blest its care;
Child, we may not enter there!
Some there are that will not.

Fain would I thy margins know,
Land of work and land of snow;
Land of life, whose rivers flow
On and on, and stay not.

Fain would I thy small limbs fold,
While the weary hours are told,
Little babe in cradle cold.
Some there are that may not.

JEAN INGELOW

LULLABY

"Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not sleep
Without her 'little birdie'? well then, sleep,
And I will sing you 'birdie.' "
Saying this,
The woman half-turned round from him she loved,
Left him one hand, and reaching through the night
Her other, found (for it was close beside)
And half-embraced the basket cradle-head
With one soft arm, which, like the pliant bough
That moving moves the nest and nestling, swayed
The cradle, while she sang this baby song.

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?

Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger,
If she sleeps a little longer
Baby, too, shall fly away.

From *Sea-Dreams* by ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

THE COTTAGER'S LULLABY

The days are cold, the nights are long;
The north-wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast,
All merry things are now at rest,
  Save thee, my pretty love!

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
The crickets long have ceased their mirth;
There's nothing stirring in the house
Save one wee, hungry, nibbling mouse;
  Then why so busy thou?

Nay, start not at that sparkling light;
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
On the window-pane bedropped with rain;
Then, little darling! sleep again,
  And wake when it is day.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

CRADLE SONGS

(To a Tune of Blake's)

I

Baby, baby bright,
Sleep can steal from sight
Little of your light:

Soft as fire in dew,
Still the life in you
Lights your slumber through.

Four white eyelids keep
Fast the seal of sleep
Deep as love is deep:

Yet, though closed it lies,
Love behind them spies
Heaven in two blue eyes.

II

Baby, baby dear,
Earth and heaven are near
Now, for heaven is here.

Heaven is every place
Where your flower-sweet face
Fills our eyes with grace.

Till your own eyes deign
Earth a glance again,
Earth and heaven are twain.

Now your sleep is done,
Shine, and show the sun
Earth and heaven are one.

III

Baby, baby sweet,
Love's own lips are meet
Scarce to kiss your feet.

Hardly love's own ear,
When your laugh crows clear,
Quite deserves to hear.

Hardly love's own wile,
Though it please awhile,
Quite deserves your smile.

Baby full of grace,
Bless us yet a space:
Sleep will come apace.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

MOTHER'S JOY

Sleep, sweet birdiekin,
  In the nest, mother's breast,
Silk soft for birdiekin,
  With wind in the East,
Husho, birdiekin,
  Sleep away another day;
Much too cold for birdiekin
  Is East-wind day!

Sleep soft, leafiekin,
  Softly curl, nor unfurl
Silk sheath for leafiekin
  Of pink and pearl!
Husho, leafiekin,
  Nor unclose, baby rose,
Much too harsh for leafiekin,
  East wind blows!

Creep close, lammiekin,
  Nestle, hide by mother's side,
Till up-spring for lammiekin
  Daisies pied!

Hush, lammiekin,
  Safe in fold from out the cold,
Till South wind for lammiekin
  Her wings unfold!

Husho, babiekin,
  Mother's joy, Father's boy,
Pearl of price is babiekin,
  And winds are keen!
Dream, sweet, babiekin,
  Golden head on rosy bed,
Over sleepy babiekin
  Angels lean!

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON

THE FISHER BABE'S CRADLE SONG

Sleep, child, sleep, for thy lulling shall be
The voice of the wind and the beat of the sea!

Past yon strip
Of pebble and sand,
The waves rise and dip,
And rush to the land.
White caps in the bay,
White breakers on shore,
And the mist finds its way
To the fisherman's door.

Oh, sleep, child, sleep, for thy lulling shall be
The voice of the wind and the beat of the sea!

The mist from the east
Comes wreathed as a cloud;
It hangs chill on my breast
Like a sea-farer's shroud.
O mist, hast thou seen
A herring boat's sail?
She went hence but yestreen
While the gloaming was pale.

Oh, sleep, child, sleep, for thy lulling shall be
The voice of the wind and the beat of the sea!

She sprang like a shaft
That is sped from a bow,
And loud the bairns laughed,
Wading deep in surf snow.
But the skipper, my Jim,
At the helm up stood he,
And my heart sailed with him
O'er the glistening sea.

Then sleep, child, sleep, for to-night's lullaby
Is a prayer, and a hope, and a tear, and a sigh!

LADY LINDSAY

DELIGHTFUL BABE—AH, HUSH!

Delightful babe! to still that tune,
  Ah, hush!—this very night I'll wing
The air and catch the white, white moon,
  To serve thee for a coral ring!

The stars I'll bring to ornament
  Thy lovely neck—Be-ba, be done;
What, moon and stars and not content?
  Would'st thou be so, had'st thou the sun?

JOSEPH SKIPSEY

LULLABY

Rockaby, lullaby, bees in the clover!
Crooning so drowsily, crying so low,
Rockaby, lullaby, dear little rover!
Down into wonderland,
Down to the under-land
Go, oh go!
Down into wonderland go!

Rockaby, lullaby, rain on the clover!
(Tears on the eyelids that waver and weep!)
Rockaby, lullaby—bending it over!
Down on the mother-world,
Down on the other world,
Sleep, oh sleep!
Down on the mother-world sleep!

Rockaby, lullaby, dew on the clover!
Dew on the eyes that will sparkle at dawn!
Rockaby, lullaby, dear little rover!
Into the stilly world,
Into the lily world,
Gone! oh gone!
Into the lily world gone!

From *The Mistress of the Manse* by
JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND

SO, SO, ROCK-A-BY SO!

So, so, rock-a-by so!
Off to the garden where dreamikins grow;
And here is a kiss on your winkyblink eyes,
  And here is a kiss on your dimpledown cheek,
And here is a kiss for the treasure that lies
In the beautiful garden 'way up in the skies
  Which you seek.
Now mind these three kisses wherever you go—
So, so, rock-a-by so!

There's one little fumfay who lives there, I know,
For he dances all night where the dreamikins grow.
I send him this kiss on your droopydrop eyes,
  I send him this kiss on your rosyred cheek.
And here is a kiss for the dream that shall rise
When the fumfay shall dance in those far-away
      skies
  Which you seek.
Be sure that you pay those three kisses you owe—
So, so, rock-a-by so!

And, by-low, as you rock-a-by go,
Don't forget mother who loveth you so!

And here is her kiss on your weepydeep eyes,
  And here is her kiss on your peachypink cheek,
And here is her kiss for the dreamland that lies
Like a babe on the breast of those far-away skies
  Which you seek—
The blinkywink garden where dreamikins grow—
So, so, rock-a-by so!

EUGENE FIELD

THE WIND'S SONG TO A BABE

I dipped my wing in the green-gray sea,
The drops I scatter are pearls to thee;
And each white pearl is dream on dream,
For each is a drop of the slumber stream.

And over and over I've kissed the clover,
And kissed the dew; a world-wide rover,
From mountain and valley all sweets I bring
To bless thy dreams while slumbering.

Then sleep in the Tree-Top, baby mine;
Close those big brown eyes of thine.
The clover bloom and the dream-pearl's spell
I sing, my love, and all is well.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR LORD

JAPANESE LULLABY

Sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—
  Little blue pigeon with velvet eyes;
Sleep to the singing of mother-bird swinging—
  Swinging the nest where her little one lies.

Away out yonder I see a star,—
  Silvery star with a tinkling song;
To the soft dew falling I hear it calling—
  Calling and tinkling the night along.

In through the window a moonbeam comes,—
  Little gold moonbeam with misty wings;
All silently creeping, it asks: "Is he sleeping—
  Sleeping and dreaming while mother sings?"

Up from the sea there floats the sob
  Of the waves that are breaking upon the shore,
As though they were groaning in anguish, and
      moaning—
  Bemoaning the ship that shall come no more.

But sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—
  Little blue pigeon with mournful eyes;
Am I not singing?—see, I am swinging—
  Swinging the nest where my darling lies.

EUGENE FIELD

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD

Dutch Lullaby

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
  Sailed off in a wooden shoe,—
Sailed on a river of crystal light
  Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
  The old man asked of the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring fish
  That live in this beautiful sea;
  Nets of silver and gold have we!"
    Said Wynken,
    Blynken,
    And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song
  As they rocked in the wooden shoe;
And the wind that sped them all night long
  Ruffled the waves of dew.
The little stars were the herring fish
  That lived in that beautiful sea—

"Now cast your nets wherever you wish,—
Never afeard are we!"
So cried the stars to the fishermen three,
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
To the stars in the twinkling foam,—
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home:
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be;
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd
dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea;
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed;
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things

As you rock in the misty sea
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:—
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

EUGENE FIELD

CRADLE SONG

Sweet dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams.

Sweet sleep, with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown;
Sweet sleep, Angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

Sweet smiles, in the night
Hover over my delight;
Sweet smiles, Mother's smiles,
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet moans, dovelike sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes,
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dovelike moans beguiles.

Sleep, sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smil'd;
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weeps.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace,
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy Maker lay and wept for me.

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When he was an infant small.
Thou His image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee.

Smiles on thee, on me, on all,
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are his own smiles;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

WILLIAM BLAKE

GOOD-NIGHT

Little baby, lay your head
On your pretty cradle-bed;
Shut your eye-peeps, now the day
And the light are gone away;
All the clothes are tucked in tight;
Little baby dear, good-night.

Yes, my darling, well I know
How the bitter wind doth blow;
And the winter's snow and rain
Patter on the window-pane:
But they cannot come in here,
To my little baby dear;

For the window shutteth fast,
Till the stormy night is past;
And the curtains warm are spread
Round about her cradle bed:
So till morning shineth bright,
Little baby dear, good-night.

JANE TAYLOR

THE CHRIST-CHILD

"But see, the Virgin blest
Hath laid her babe to rest."

THE COVENTRY CAROL

Lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
By, by, lully, lullay;
Lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
By, by, lully, lullay.

O sisters too, how may we do,
For to preserve this day
This poor Youngling, for Whom we do sing,
By, by, lully, lullay?

Herod, the king, in his raging,
Chargèd he hath this day
His men of might, at his own sight,
All children young to slay.

Then woe is me, poor Child, for Thee,
And ever mourn and say,
For thy parting nor say nor sing,
By, by, lully, lullay.

A. D. 1534

A DREAM CAROL

Ah, my dear Son, said Mary, ah, my dear,
Kiss thy mother, Jesu, with a laughing cheer!

This endnes night I saw a sight
All in my sleep,
Mary, that May, she sung lullay
And sore did weep;
To keep, she sought, full fast about
Her Son from cold.
Joseph said, wife, my joy, my life,
Say what ye would.
Nothing, my spouse, is in this house
Unto my pay;
My Son a king, that made all thing,
Lieth in hay.

Ah, my dear Son, said Mary, ah, my dear,
Kiss thy mother, Jesu, with a laughing cheer!

My mother dear, amend your cheer
And now be still;
Thus for to lie it is soothly
My Father's will.

Derision great passion
  Infinitely,
As it is found many a wound
  Suffer shall I;
On Calvary that is so high
  There shall I be,
Man to restore, nailed full sore
  Upon a tree.
Ah, my dear Son, said Mary, ah, my dear,
Kiss thy mother, Jesu, with a laughing cheer!

Sandy's Christmas Carols

IN BETHLEHEM

In Bethlehem, that noble place,
As by the Prophet said it was,
Of the Virgin Mary, filled with grace.
Salvator mundi natus est.
Be we merry in this feast,
In quo Salvator natus est.

On Christmas night an Angel told
The shepherds watching by their fold,
In Bethlehem, full nigh the wold,
"*Salvator mundi natus est.*"
Be we merry in this feast,
In quo Salvator natus est.

The shepherds were encompassed right,
About them shone a glorious light,
"Dread ye naught," said the Angel bright,
"*Salvator mundi natus est.*"
Be we merry in this feast,
In quo Salvator natus est.

"No cause have ye to be afraid,
For why? this day is Jesus laid
On Mary's lap, that gentle maid:
Salvator mundi natus est."
Be we merry in this feast,
In quo Salvator natus est.

"And thus in faith find him ye shall
Laid poorly in an ox's stall."
The shepherds then lauded God all,
Quia Salvator natus est.
Be we merry in this feast,
In quo Salvator natus est.

Christmas Carolles, A. D. 1550

CRADLE HYMN

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He
lay—
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

MARTIN LUTHER

WHISPERING PALMS

Holy angels and blest,
  Through these Palms as ye sweep,
Hold their branches at rest,
  For my Babe is asleep.

And ye, Bethlehem palm-trees,
  As stormy winds rush
In tempest and fury
  Your angry noise hush;—
Move gently, move gently,
  Restrain your wild sweep;
Hold your branches at rest—
  My Babe is asleep.

LOPE DE VEGA

A HYMN ON THE NATIVITY

I sing the birth was born to-night,
The author both of life and light;
  The angels so did sound it.
And like the ravished shepherds said,
We saw the light and were afraid,
  Yet searched, and true they found it.

The Son of God, th' Eternal King,
That did us all salvation bring,
  And freed the soul from danger;
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word, which heaven and earth did make,
  Was now laid in a manger.

The Father's wisdom willed it so,
The Son's obedience knew no No,
  Both wills were in one stature;
And as that wisdom had decreed,
The Word was now made Flesh indeed,
  And took on Him our nature.

What comfort by Him do we win,
Who made Himself the price of sin,
To make us heirs of Glory!
To see this babe, all innocence,
A martyr born in our defence:
Can man forget this story?

BEN JONSON

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS-DAY

Being a Dialogue between Three Shepherds

Where is this blessed Babe
That hath made
All the world so full of joy
And expectation;
That glorious boy
That crowns each nation
With a triumphant wreath of blessedness?

Where should he be but in the throng,
And among
His angel ministers, that sing
And take wing
Just as may echo to his voice,
And rejoice,
When wing and tongue and all
May so procure their happiness?

But he hath other waiters now:
A poor cow,
An ox and mule, stand and behold,
And wonder
That a stable should enfold
Him that can thunder.

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

O what a gracious God have we,
How good! how great! even as our misery.

JEREMY TAYLOR

CHRIST'S NATIVITY

I

Awake, glad heart! get up, and sing!
It is the birthday of thy King.
Awake! awake!
The sun doth shake
Light from his locks, and, all the way
Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

II

Awake, awake! hark how th' wood rings,
Winds whisper, and the busy springs
A concert make;
Awake! awake!
Man is their high-priest, and should rise
To offer up the sacrifice.

III

I would I were some bird, or star,
Flutt'ring in woods, or lifted far
Above this inn
And road of sin!
Then either star or bird should be
Shining or singing still to thee.

IV

I would I had in my best part
Fit rooms for thee! or that my heart
Were so clean as
Thy manger was!
But I am all filth and obscene;
Yet, if thou wilt, thou can'st make clean.

V

Sweet Jesu! will then; let no more
This leper haunt and soil thy door!
Cure him, ease him,
O release him!
And let once more, by mystic birth,
The Lord of life be born in earth.

VI

How kind is Heav'n to man! If here
One sinner doth amend,
Straight there is joy, and ev'ry sphere
In music doth contend.
And shall we then no voices lift?
Are mercy and salvation
Not worth our thanks? Is life a gift
Of no more acceptation?

Shall he that did come down from thence,
And here for us was slain,
Shall he be now cast off? no sense
Of all his woes remain?
Can neither love nor suff'rings bind?
Are we all stone and earth?
Neither his bloody passions mind,
Nor one day bless his birth?
Alas, my God! thy birth now here
Must not be numbered in the year.*

HENRY VAUGHAN

* *The Puritans abolished the celebration of Christmas.*

THE CHILD JESUS

A Cornish Carol

Welcome that star in Judah's sky,
  That voice o'er Bethlehem's palmy glen!
The lamp for sages hailed on high,
  The tones that thrilled the shepherd men:
Glory to God in loftiest heaven!
  Thus angels smote the echoing chord;
Glad tidings unto man forgiven,
  Peace from the presence of the Lord.

The Shepherds sought that birth divine,
  The Wise Men traced their guided way;
There, by strange light and mystic sign,
  The God they came to worship lay.
A human Babe in beauty smiled,
  Where lowing oxen round Him trod:
A maiden clasped her awful Child,
  Pure offspring of the breath of God.

Those voices from on high are mute,
  The star the Wise Men saw is dim;
But hope still guides the wanderer's foot,
  And faith renews the angel hymn:

Glory to God in loftiest heaven!
  Touch with glad hand the ancient chord;
Good tidings unto man forgiven,
  Peace from the presence of the Lord.

ROBERT STEPHEN HAWKER

CHRIST IN THE CRADLE

Look, how he shakes for cold!
How pale his lips are grown!
Wherein his lips to fold
Yet mantle has he none.
His pretty feet and hands
(Of late more pure and white
Than is the snow
That pains them so)
Have lost their candour quite.
His lips are blue
(Where roses grew),
He's frozen ev'rywhere:
All th' heat he has
Joseph, alas!
Gives in a groan; or Mary in a tear.

PATRICK CARY

NEW PRINCE, NEW POMP

Behold a silly tender Babe,
In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies;
Alas, a piteous sight.
The inns are full, no man will yield
This little pilgrim bed;
But forced He is with silly beasts
In crib to shroud His head.
Despise Him not for lying there,
First what He is inquire;
An orient pearl is often found
In depth of dirty mire.
Weigh not His crib, His wooden dish,
Nor beasts that by Him feed;
Weigh not His mother's poor attire,
Nor Joseph's simple weed.
This stable is a Prince's court,
This crib His chair of state;
The beasts are parcel of His pomp,
The wooden dish His plate.
The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;

The Prince Himself is come from heaven,
  This pomp is praiséd there.
With joy approach, O Christian wight!
  Do homage to thy King;
And highly praise this humble pomp
  Which He from heaven doth bring.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL

AND THEY LAID HIM IN A MANGER

Happy crib, that wert alone
To my God, bed, cradle, throne!
Whilst thy glorious vileness I
View with divine fancy's eye,
Sordid filth seems all the cost,
State, and splendor, crowns do boast.

See heaven's sacred majesty
Humbled beneath poverty;
Swaddled up in homely rags
On a bed of straw and flags!
He whose hands the heavens displayed,
And the world's foundation laid,
From the world's almost exiled,
Of all ornaments despoiled.
Perfumes bathe Him not, new-born,
Persian mantles not adorn;
Nor do the rich roofs look bright
With the jasper's orient light.
Where, O royal Infant, be
Th' ensigns of Thy majesty;
Thy Sire's equalizing state;

And Thy sceptre that rules fate?
Where's Thy angel-guarded throne,
Whence Thy laws Thou didst make known,
Laws which heaven, earth, hell, obeyed?
These, ah! these aside He laid;
Would the emblem be—of pride
By humility outvied?

SIR EDWARD SHERBURNE

LULLABY IN BETHLEHEM

There hath come an host to see Thee,
Baby dear,
Bearded men with eyes of flame
And lips of fear,
For the heavens, they say, have broken
Into blinding gulfs of glory,
And the Lord, they say, hath spoken
In a little wondrous story,
Baby dear.

There have come three kings to greet Thee,
Baby dear,
Crowned with gold, and clad in purple,
They draw near.
They have brought rare silks to bind Thee,
At Thy feet, behold, they spread them,
From their thrones they sprang to find Thee,
And a blazing star hath led them,
Baby dear.

I have neither jade nor jasper,
Baby dear,

Thou art all my hope and glory,
And my fear,
Yet for all the gems that strew Thee,
And the costly gowns that fold Thee,
Yea, though all the world should woo Thee,
Thou art mine—and fast I hold Thee,
Baby dear.

HENRY HOWARTH BASHFORD

THE CHILD AT BETHLEHEM

I

Long, long before the Babe could speak,
When he would kiss his mother's cheek
  And to her bosom press,
The brightest angels standing near
Would turn away to hide a tear
  For they are motherless.

II

Where were ye, Birds, that bless his name,
When wingless to the world He came,
And wordless, though himself the Word
That made the blossom and the bird?

III

  To His Mother
  He brought a Lily white,
  That bowed its fragrant head
  And blushed a rosy red
  Before a fairer light.

He brought a Rose; and, lo,
The crimson blossom saw
Her beauty, and in awe
Became as white as snow.

JOHN BANISTER TABB

MARY'S BABY

Joseph, mild and noble, bent above the straw:
A pale girl, a frail girl, suffering he saw;
"Oh, my Love, my Mary, my bride, I pity thee!"
"Nay, Dear," said Mary, "all is well with me!"
"Baby, my baby, O my babe," she sang.
Suddenly the golden night all with music rang.

Angels leading shepherds, shepherds leading sheep:
The silence of worship broke the mother's sleep.
All the meek and lowly of all the world were there;
Smiling, she showed them that her Child was fair,
"Baby, my baby," kissing Him she said.
Suddenly a flaming star through the heavens sped.

Three old men and weary knelt them side by side,
The world's wealth forswearing, majesty and pride;
Worldly might and wisdom before the Babe bent low:
Weeping, maid Mary said, "I love Him so!"
"Baby, my baby," and the Baby slept.
Suddenly on Calvary all the olives wept.

SHAEMAS OSHEEL

HIS MOTHER'S JOY

Little, I ween, did Mary guess
  As on her arm her baby lay,
What tides of joy would swell and beat,
  Through ages long on Christmas day.

And what if she had known it all,—
  The awful splendor of his fame?
The inmost heart of all her joy
  Would still, methinks, have been the same:

The joy that every mother knows
  Who feels her babe against her breast:
The voyage long is overpast,
  And now is calm and peace and rest.

"Art thou the Christ?" The wonder came
  As easy as her infant's breath:
But answer none. Enough for her,
  That love had triumphed over death.

JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

TO THE CHILD JESUS

I

The Nativity

Could every time-worn heart but see Thee once again,
A happy human child among the homes of men,
The age of doubt would pass,—the vision of Thy face
Would silently restore the childhood of the race.

II

The Flight Into Egypt

Thou wayfaring Jesus, a pilgrim and stranger,
Exiled from heaven by love at thy birth,
Exiled again from thy rest in the manger,
A fugitive child 'mid the perils of earth,—
Cheer with thy fellowship all who are weary,
Wandering far from the land that they love;
Guide every heart that is homeless and dreary,
Safe to its home in Thy presence above.

HENRY VAN DYKE

THE CHRISTMAS BABE

All in the night when sleeping
I lay in slumber's chain,
The Christmas Babe came weeping
Outside my window-pane.
The Christmas Child whom faithless
Men turn from their hearthstone—
My dream was dumb and breathless,
The Christmas Babe made moan.

The small hands beat impatient
Upon my close-locked door,
The small hands that have fashioned
The world, the stars, and more.
He heard no sound of coming,
His cries broke wild and keen,
The Christmas Babe went roaming
For one to take Him in.

A burning bush of splendor
Enfolds the Christmas Child,
Like some meek bird and tender,
In gold thorns undefiled.

I listen long to hear Him
Come crying at my door.
Voices of night I fear them,
And He comes by no more.

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

In the bleak mid-winter
  Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
  Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
  Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
  Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
  When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
  A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
  Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him whom cherubim
  Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
  And a mangerful of hay;

Enough for Him whom angels
  Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
  Which adore.

Angels and archangels
  May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
  Thronged the air;
But only His mother,
  In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Beloved
  With a kiss.

What can I give Him;
  Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
  I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man,
  I would do my part:
Yet what can I give Him,
  Give my heart.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

ST. BRIDE'S LULLABY

Oh, Baby Christ, so dear to me,
  Sang Briget Bride:
How sweet thou art,
My baby dear,
Heart of my heart!

Heavy her body was with thee,
Mary, beloved of One in Three—
  Sang Briget Bride—
Mary, who bore thee, little lad:
But light her heart was, light and glad
With God's love clad.

Sit on my knee,
  Sang Briget Bride:
Sit here
O Baby dear,
Close to my heart, my heart:
For I thy foster-mother am,
My helpless lamb!
O have no fear,
  Sang good St. Bride.

None, none,
No fear have I:
So let me cling
Close to thy side
While thou dost sing,
O Briget Bride!
My Lord, my Prince, I sing:
My Baby dear, my King!
Sang Briget Bride.

"FIONA MACLEOD"

NO ROOM

Foot-sore and weary, Mary tried
Some rest to seek, but was denied.
"There is no room," the blind ones cried.

Meekly the Virgin turned away,
No voice entreating her to stay;
There was no room for God that day.

No room for her, round whose tired feet
Angels are bowed in transport sweet
The mother of their God to greet.

No room for Him in whose small hand
The troubled sea and mighty land
Lie cradled like a grain of sand;

No room, O Babe Divine! for Thee
That Christmas night; and even we
Dare shut our hearts and turn the key.

In vain Thy pleading baby cry
Strikes our deaf souls; we pass Thee by,
Unsheltered 'neath the wintry sky.

No room for God! O Christ, that we
Should bar our doors, nor ever see
Our Saviour waiting patiently.

Fling wide the doors! Dear Christ turn back!
The ashes on my hearth lie black—
Of light and warmth a total lack.

How can I bid thee enter here
Amid the desolation drear
Of luke-warm love and craven fear?

What bleaker shelter can there be
Than my cold heart's tepidity—
Chilled, wind-tossed, as the winter sea?

Dear Lord, I shrink from Thy pure eye,
No home to offer Thee have I;
Yet in Thy mercy pass not by.

AGNES REPPLIER

AVE MARIA PLENA GRATIA

Was this His coming! I hoped to see
A scene of wondrous glory, as was told
Of some great God who in a rain of gold
Broke open bars and fell on Danæ:
Or a dread vision as when Semele
Sickening for love and unappeased desire
Prayed to see God's clear body, and the fire
Caught her white limbs and slew her utterly:
With such glad dreams I sought this holy place,
And now with wondering eyes and heart I stand
Before this supreme mystery of Love:
A kneeling girl with passionless pale face,
An angel with a lily in his hand,
And over both with outstretched wings the Dove.

OSCAR WILDE

Florence

THE VIRGIN MARY TO THE CHILD JESUS

'But see the Virgin blest
Hath laid her babe to rest.'
—Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*

I

Sleep, sleep, mine Holy One!
My flesh, my Lord!—what name? I do not know
A name that seemeth not too high or low,
Too far from me or heaven:
My Jesus, *that* is best! that word being given
By the majestic angel whose command
Was softly as a man's beseeching said,
When I and all the earth appeared to stand
In the great overflow
Of light celestial from his wings and head.
Sleep, sleep, my saving One!

II

And art Thou come for saving, baby-browed
And speechless Being—art Thou come for saving?
The palm that grows beside our door is bowed
By treadings of the low wind from the south,
A restless shadow through the chamber waving:

Upon its bough a bird sings in the sun,
But Thou, with that close slumber on thy mouth,
Dost seem of wind and sun already weary.
Art come for saving, O my weary One?

III

Perchance this sleep that shutteth out the dreary
Earth-sound and motions, opens on thy soul
High dreams on fire with God;
High songs that make the pathways where they roll
More bright than stars do theirs; and visions new
Of thine eternal Nature's old abode.
Suffer this mother's kiss,
Best thing that earthly is,
To glide the music and the glory through,
Nor narrow in thy dream the broad upliftings
Of any seraph wing.
Thus noiseless, thus. Sleep, sleep, my dreaming
One!

IV

The slumber of his lips meseems to run
Through *my* lips to mine heart, to all its shiftings
Of sensual life, bringing contrariousness
In a great calm. I feel I could lie down
As Moses did, and die,—and then live most.

I am 'ware of you, heavenly Presences,
That stand with your peculiar light unlost,
Each forehead with a high thought for a crown,
Unsunned i' the sunshine! I am 'ware.
Ye throw
No shade against the wall! How motionless
Ye round me with your living statuary,
While through your whiteness, in and outwardly,
Continual thoughts of God appear to go,
Like light's soul in itself. I bear, I bear
To look upon the dropt lids of your eyes,
Though their external shining testifies
To that beatitude within which were
Enough to blast an eagle at his sun:
I fall not on my sad clay face before ye,—
I look on his. I know
My spirit which dilateth with the woe
Of his mortality,
May well contain your glory.
Yea, drop your lids more low.
Ye are but fellow-worshippers with me!
Sleep, sleep, my worshipped One!

V

We sat among the stalls at Bethlehem;
The dumb kine from their fodder turning them,

Softened their hornèd faces
To almost human gazes
Toward the newly Born:
The simple shepherds from the star-lit brooks
Brought visionary looks,
As yet in their astonied hearing rung
The strange sweet angel-tongue:
The magi of the East, in sandals worn,
Knelt reverent, sweeping round,
With long pale beards, their gifts upon the ground,
The incense, myrrh and gold
These baby hands were impotent to hold:
So let all earthlies and celestials wait
Upon thy royal state.
Sleep, sleep, my kingly One!

VI

I am not proud—meek angels, ye invest
New meeknesses to hear such utterance rest
On mortal lips,—"I am not proud"—*not proud!*
Albeit in my flesh God sent his Son,
Albeit over Him my head is bowed
As others bow before Him, still mine heart
Bows lower than their knees. O centuries
That roll in vision your futurities
My future grave athwart,—

Whose murmurs seem to reach me while I keep
Watch o'er this sleep,—
Say of me as the Heavenly said—"Thou art
The blessedest of women!"—blessedest,
Not holiest, not noblest, no high name
Whose height misplaced may pierce me like a shame
When I sit meek in heaven!
For me, for me,
God knows that I am feeble like the rest!
I often wandered forth, more child than maiden
Among the midnight hills of Galilee
Whose summits looked heaven-laden,
Listening to silence as it seemed to be
God's voice, so soft yet strong, so fain to press
Upon my heart as heaven did on the height,
And waken up its shadows by a light,
And show its vileness by a holiness.
Then I knelt down most silent like the night,
Too self-renounced for fears,
Raising my small face to the boundless blue
Whose stars did mix and tremble in my tears:
God heard *them* falling after, with his dew.

VII

So, seeing my corruption, can I see
This Incorruptible now born of me,

This fair new Innocence no sun did chance
To shine on, (for even Adam was no child,)
Created from my nature all defiled,
This mystery, from out mine ignorance,—
Nor feel the blindness, stain corruption more
Than others do, or I did heretofore?
Can hands wherein such burden pure has been,
Not open with the cry "unclean, unclean,"
More oft than any else beneath the skies?
Ah King, ah Christ, ah son!
The kine, the shepherds, the abasèd wise
Must all less lowly wait
Than I, upon thy state.
Sleep, sleep, my kingly One!

VIII

Art Thou a King, then? Come, his universe,
Come, crown me Him a King!
Pluck rays from all such stars as never fling
Their light where fell a curse,
And make a crowning for this kingly brow!—
What is my word? Each empyreal star
Sits in a sphere afar
In shining ambuscade:
The child-brow, crowned by none,
Keeps its unchildlike shade.
Sleep, sleep, my crownless One!

IX

Unchildlike shade! No other babe doth wear
An aspect very sorrowful, as Thou.
No small babe-smiles my watching heart has seen
To float like speech the speechless lips between,
No dovelike cooing in the golden air,
No quick short joys of leaping babyhood.
Alas, our earthly good
In heaven thought evil, seems too good for Thee:
Yet sleep, my weary One!

X

And then the drear sharp tongue of prophecy,
With the dread sense of things which shall be done,
Doth smite me inly, like a sword: a sword?
That "smites the Shepherd." Then, I think aloud
The words "despised,"—"rejected,"—every word
Recoiling into darkness as I view
The DARLING on my knee.
Bright angels,—move not—less ye stir the cloud
Betwixt my soul and his futurity!
I must not die, with mother's work to do,
And could not live—and see.

XI

It is enough to bear
This image still and fair,
This holier in sleep
Than a saint at prayer,
This aspect of a child
Who never sinned or smiled;
This Presence in an infant's face;
This sadness most like love,
This love than love more deep,
This weakness like omnipotence
It is so strong to move.
Awful is this watching place,
Awful what I see from hence—
A king, without regalia,
A God, without the thunder,
A child, without the heart for play;
Ay, a Creator, rent asunder
From his first glory and cast away
On his own world, for me alone
To hold in hands created, crying—SON!

XII

That tear fell not on Thee,
Beloved, yet thou stirrest in thy slumber!
THOU, stirring not for glad sounds out of number

Which through the vibratory palm-trees run
From summer-wind and bird,
So quickly hast thou heard
A tear fall silently?
Wak'st thou, O loving One?—

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

ASLEEP

"Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep."

TO A SLEEPING CHILD

Thine eyelids slept so beauteously, I deem'd
No eyes could wake so beautiful as they:
Thy rosy cheeks in such still slumbers lay,
I loved their peacefulness, nor ever dream'd
Of dimples;—for those parted lips so seem'd,
I never thought a smile could sweetlier play;
Nor that so graceful life could chase away
Thy graceful death,—till those blue eyes unbeam'd.
Now slumber lies in dimpled eddies drown'd,
And roses bloom more rosily for joy,
And odorous silence ripens into sound
And fingers move to sound.—All-beauteous boy!
How dost thou waken into smiles and prove,
If not more lovely, thou art more like Love!

THOMAS HOOD

TO AN INFANT SLEEPING

Oh, drinking deep of slumber's holy wine,
Whence may the smile that lights thy countenance be?
We seek in vain the mystery to divine,
For in thy dim unconscious infancy
No games as yet, no playfellows are thine,
To stir in waking hours such thoughts of glee
As, recollected in thine innocent dream,
Might shed across thy face this happy gleam.

It may be, though small notice thou canst take,
Thou feelest that an atmosphere of love
Is ever round thee, sleeping or awake:
Thou wakest, and kind faces from above
Bend o'er thee. When thou sleepest, for thy sake
All sounds are hushed, and each doth gently move:
And this dim consciousness of tender care
Has caused thy cheek this light of joy to wear.

Or, may be, thoughts deeper than we deem
Visit an infant's slumbers—God is near,
Angels are talking to them in their dream,
Angelic voices whispering sweet and clear;

And round them lies that region's holy gleam,
But newly left, and light which is not here;
And thus has come that smile upon thy face,
As tidings brought thee from thy native place.

But whatso'er the causes which beguiled
That dimple on thy countenance, It is gone;
Fair is the lake disturbed by ripple mild,
But not less fair when ripple it has none:
And now what deep repose is thine, dear child,
What smoothness thy unruffled cheek has won.
Oh, who that gazed upon thee could forbear
The silent breathing of a heartfelt prayer?

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH,
Archbishop of Dublin

THE KING OF THE CRADLE

Draw back the cradle curtains, Kate,
  While watch and ward you're keeping,
Let's see the monarch in his state,
  And view him while he's sleeping.
He smiles and clasps his tiny hand,
  With sunbeams o'er him gleaming,—
A world of baby fairyland
  He visits while he's dreaming.

Monarch of pearly powder-puff,
  Asleep in nest so cosy,
Shielded from breath of breezes rough
  By curtains warm and rosy:
He slumbers soundly in his cell,
  As weak as one decrepid,
Though King of Coral, Lord of Bell,
  And Knight of Bath that's tepid.

Ah, lucky tyrant! Happy lot!
  Fair watchers without number,
Who sweetly sing beside his cot,
  And hush him off to slumber;

White hands in wait to smooth so neat
  His pillow when it's rumpled—
A couch of rose leaves soft and sweet,
  Not one of which is crumpled!

Will yonder dainty dimpled hand—
  Size, nothing and a quarter—
E'er grasp a saber, lead a band
  To glory and to slaughter?
Or, may I ask, will those blue eyes—
  In baby patois, "peepers"—
E'en in the House of Commons rise,
  And try to catch the Speaker's?

Will that smooth brow o'er Hansard frown,
  Confused by lore statistic?
Or will those lips e'er stir the town
  From pulpit ritualistic?
Will e'er that tiny Sybarite
  Become an author noted?
That little brain the world's delight,
  Its works by all men quoted?

Though rosy, dimpled, plump, and round
  Though fragile, soft, and tender,
Sometimes, alas! it may be found
  The thread of life is slender!

A little shoe, a little glove—
  Affection never waning—
The shattered idol of our love
  Is all that is remaining!

Then does one chance, in fancy, hear,
  Small feet in childish patter,
Tread soft as they a grave draw near,
  And voices hush their chatter;
'Tis small and new; they pause in fear,
  Beneath the gray church tower,
To consecrate it with a tear,
  And deck it with a flower.

Who can predict the future, Kate—
  Your fondest aspiration!
Who knows the solemn laws of fate,
  That govern all creation?
Who knows what lot awaits your boy—
  Of happiness or sorrow?
Sufficient for to-day is joy,
  Leave tears, Sweet, for to-morrow!

JOSEPH ASHBY-STERRY

TO MARY, SLEEPING

Sleep on, sleep on! while yet thy sleep is sweet,
Nor scared by phantoms of world-weary care,
False pleasure, fear, or still delusive hope!
Sweeter the slumber that, perchance, for thee
Thy guardian angel tints with dreamy bliss.
That cherub-smile speaks not of gross delight;
And haply on thy sinless vision now
Celestial forms may gleam, like morning mists
That yet shall brighten into perfect day;
Or to thy tender organs suited, soft
As breath of angels, music floats around;—
Melodious whisperings, that half unfold
The harmonies enfranchised spirits know.
Then, if such visions do thy slumbers bless,
Sleep on, dear, sinless, happy dreamer, sleep;
For I would not the short-lived charm disturb,
Not e'en to meet thy eye's sad earnestness;
Those eyes that shed upon thy baby face
A tender, holy, melancholy light,—
Like seraph Pity guarding Innocence.
And yet more radiant shall their lustre be
Where strong by struggle, eloquent by thought,

The mind shall dart its deeper meanings thence;
Or pure devotion's rapt intensity
Look through their upward light.
How soft the touch
Of thy dark silky hair! May vanity,
That feasts upon, saps the fairest flowers,
Blight not thy spirit's sweet development.
But may thy heart be artless as thy smile;
Like those clear eyes thy soul be luminous;
And when, at last, upspringing to its God,
Be freed from earthly stain, and rise to Heaven
Sweet as the balmy breath of infant sleep.

ANNA MARIA WELLS

A BABY ASLEEP AFTER PAIN

As a drenched drowned bee
Hangs numb and heavy from a bending flower,
So clings to me
My baby, her brown hair brushed with wet tears
And laid against her cheek;
Her soft white legs hanging heavily over my arm,
Swinging heavily to my movement as I walk.
My sleeping baby hangs upon my life,
Like a burden she hangs on me.
She has always seemed so light.
But now she is wet with tears and numb with pain.
Even her floating hair sinks heavily,
Reaching downwards;
As the wings of a drenched, drowned bee
Are a heaviness, and a weariness.

D. H. LAWRENCE

SLEEPING AND WATCHING

Sleep on, baby, on the floor
  Tired of all the playing:
Sleep with smile the sweeter for
  That, you dropped away in.
On your curls' full roundness stand
  Golden lights serenely;
One cheek pushed out by the hand,
  Folds the dimple wily:
Little head and little foot
  Heavy laid for pleasure,
Underneath the lids half shut
  Slants the shining azure.
Open-soul in noon-day sure,
  So you lie and slumber:
Nothing evil having done,
  Nothing can encumber.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

HOLY INNOCENTS

Sleep, little Baby, sleep;
The holy Angels love thee,
And guard thy bed, and keep
A blessed watch above thee.
No spirit can come near
Nor evil beast to harm thee:
Sleep, Sweet, devoid of fear
Where nothing need alarm thee.

The Love which doth not sleep,
The eternal Arms surround thee:
The Shepherd of the sheep
In perfect love hath found thee.
Sleep through the holy night,
Christ-kept from snare and sorrow.
Until thou wake to light
And love and warmth tomorrow.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

"O SLEEP, SWEET INFANT"

O sleep, sweet infant, for we all must sleep,—
And wake like babes, that we may wake with Him
Who watches still His own from harm to keep,
And o'er them spreads the wings of cherubim.

From *Of Such Is the Kingdom of God*,
by HARTLEY COLERIDGE

TO A SLEEPING BABY'S EYES

And thou, twin orbs of love and joy!
  Unveil thy glories with the morn—
  Dear eyes, another day is born—
Awake, O little sleeping boy!
Bright are the summer morning skies,
  But in this quiet little room
  There broods a chill, oppressive gloom—
All for the brightness of thine eyes.
Without those radiant orbs of thine
  How dark this little world would be—
  This sweet home-world that worships thee—
So let their wondrous glories shine
On those who love their warmth and joy—
Awake, O sleeping little boy.

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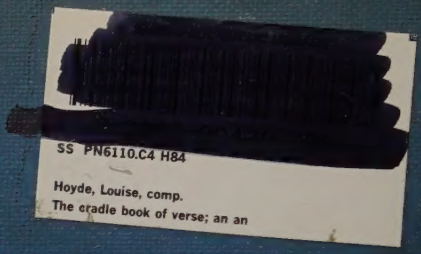
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